MENCIUS

AN ONLINE TEACHING TRANSLATION



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Additional Translations and Other Materials

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PREFATORY NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

This translation is an expansion of teaching materials developed for college courses over a period of several decades. When I was teaching, I found it convenient to provide students with translations that fit the terminology and interpretations I would use in class, and, of course, the expense of these materials to students was much less than the cost of books. In later years, I posted course materials online, reducing expense further. Online materials allowed open public access, and I received many messages indicating that the materials were being consulted, especially by teachers. A few years ago, I took the partial materials I had used for the *Analects of Confucius* and expanded them into a full, annotated translation, which I labeled a "teaching translation." I hope this full translation will also be helpful in this way.

No one translation is definitive, and scholars who have devoted more specialized study to the *Mencius* than I have published excellent translations in book form that I would recommend to anyone with a serious interest in the text. D.C. Lau's 1970 translation, available from Penguin Books, is superb, and I admire my late friend Irene Bloom's 2009 translation with Columbia University Press. I have consulted these translations throughout, though my interpretations sometimes differ, and I use somewhat different vocabulary. In addition, I have found the rather idiosyncratic 1963 translation by W.A.C.H. Dobson to add insights in a number of cases.

Any translation of the *Mencius* is ultimately indebted to the Chinese commentarial tradition. The earliest commentary that exists for the text is the richly detailed work of Zhao Qi 趙岐 (108-201 CE), and all scholars are reliant on Zhao for many identifications and explanations that no later writer could have supplied. Nevertheless, because no outside confirmation exists for many of Zhao's assertions, we need to bear in mind that despite being our earliest guide, Zhao was himself four centuries removed from Mencius, and we cannot be sure in each case how reliable his information was. Zhao's commentary forms part of the most extensive traditional collection of philological comments: the *Mengzi Zhengyi* 孟子正義 [Corrected interpretations of the *Mencius*], compiled chiefly by Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763-1820). A very different, largely philosophical commentarial approach is represented by the Song Neo-Confucian, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), whose work I consulted in the helpful *Sishu duben* 四書讀本 ["Four Books" reader] edition of Jiang Boqian 蔣伯潛 (1892-1956), who himself provides many useful comments. And, like all recent translators, I found the commentary and Modern Chinese translation edition of Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (1909-1992), *Mengzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 [*Mencius*: an annotated translation] to be indispensable.

A companion version to the "Teaching Translation" appears online as "*Mencius*: Translation, Commentary, Notes," which reflects more fully the interpretations that informed my research on the text, and on Confucianism and early Chinese thought in general, and which deals with points of scholarly interest that would be less germane in a college classroom setting. Some of these larger issues are outlined in brief in entries of the Glossary, appended to this translation.

INTRODUCTION

The *Mencius* (in Chinese, *Mengzi* 孟子, the book of Master Meng) may be the Classical Chinese philosophical text that most profoundly influenced traditional Chinese culture. Although never granted quite the explicit homage that was given to the *Analects* (*Lunyu*) among Confucian works, nor, perhaps, as admired as the two great Daoist texts, the *Dao de jing* and *Zhuangzi*, the ideas and arguments in the *Mencius* have a clarity and literary power that gave them extraordinary impact over time. Although the full force of that impact did not reveal itself until the late Tang and Song Dynasties, over a millennium after Mencius's death, ultimately the *Mencius* became a central canonical source for the animating ideas of the Neo-Confucian movement, which, in its several forms, dominated Chinese intellectual life from the thirteenth century through the nineteenth, and survives today in the form of New Confucianism, a growing influence in the People's Republic of China and the Chinese diaspora.

Mencius's Life

The name Mencius, like the name Confucius, is a Latinized version of a Chinese name. Mencius's real name was Meng Ke 孟軻. (He is referred to by this name only once in the *Mencius,* in 1B.16.) Mencius's disciples referred to him as "Master Meng," which in Chinese was "Mengzi," turned into "Mencius" by European interpreters of Chinese culture two thousand years after his death.

We do not know Mencius's dates with accuracy, but we do know that he was an old man at the time of his greatest life crisis, in 314, and we estimate his lifetime as falling in the period 380 to 300 (throughout this translation, all dates, unless otherwise specified, are BCE).

For about the first 60 years of his life, Mencius seems to have lived quietly, becoming among the most renowned Confucian teachers of his age. Then, sometime before 320, he decided that the time was ripe to renew Confucius's active effort to persuade the rulers of the increasingly violent Warring States era (453-221) to accept the Confucian Dao and reform the world, and, like Confucius, he began wandering from state to state, trying to find a ruler who would employ him and implement Confucian governance. About 314, he finally secured an appointment as a high advisor to the king of Qi, a strong state that occupied territory northeast of Confucius's homeland of Lu and Mencius's own home, the small state of Zou. But, to his dismay, soon after the king showed this strong apparent interest in Confucianism, Qi launched a war to conquer another major state just to the north, Yan. Prior to launching the war, it seems that the king lured Mencius into appearing to approve his aggressive attack, and Mencius apparently concluded that his appointment was actually no more than a public relations ploy on the part of Qi to justify its power play in Yan by claiming the endorsement of the most famous Confucian

sage of the time. He resigned his position in despair and retired to his home state, where he lived the rest of his life as a teacher. (These events are narrated in the *Mencius*, mostly in a single series of passages, 2B.8-14.)

Although there are gaps in our chronology of Mencius's biography, there is no figure in Classical China about whom we know more and whom we know so intimately. Although we have a sense of the characters of many people in China's Classical era, and in some cases tales about them include colorful detail, many of those accounts were formulated decades or centuries after their lifetimes, and many or most cases have the troublesome defect of being obviously fictional, often building dramatic episodes around a few core features associated with the historical person. But the *Mencius* is not only rich in detail, both the pattern of event and – more important – the consistent texture of Mencius's speech and behavior make it very difficult to doubt that, on the whole, we see here a portrait drawn from life by those who knew him well. Mencius's personality is a dominant factor in the *Mencius*, and the book shows us a brilliant, volatile, charismatic, irritating, self-righteous man, whose intellectual insights can be so keen that his influence is still felt in China today, and whose self-justifying rationalizations can be so intellectually facile as to undermine the integrity of his central philosophy. The contradictions in his person and lapses in his conduct signal that his textual persona was not an invention of others. We seem to be meeting a real man (real enough that some readers may occasionally feel they would rather have met someone else!).

Nevertheless, we have to recall that the text most likely reached its current state only after Mencius's death, and because it was clearly recorded and assembled by Mencius's followers, we can assume that historical accuracy often took second place to partisan motives, and that both the memories of those writing and their willingness to embellish, censor, or invent historical speeches and actions would be guided by the doctrinal purposes of the record they were creating.

Mencius's World of History

The *Mencius* is very much a text of its time: it was written for an audience with a shared understanding of history and culture, and to read it profitably now, there are certain features of the worldview of its original readers that need to be clear.

The period when Mencius lived was part of what is now known as the "Warring States Era," as its name implies, an era of endemic war between powerful regional polities in the area we now call "China." For Mencius and his contemporaries, the period was seen not only as a chaotic time, filled with violence and misery, but as a lapse from an earlier period of peace and unity, presided over by a single strong ruling house: the Zhou Dynasty. The goal of Mencius and others like him was finding a way to a future that restored the peace and unity of the past, and most of Mencius's theoretical philosophical positions were taken in the service of that pragmatic goal. So to understand Mencius, it's important to understand the restorationist goal that he was looking back towards, the image of the ideal past. That image was, in part, based on myth and

imagination. But a substantial component was grounded in real events. In historical terms, the actual basis for Mencius's belief in an era of past order was the early Zhou Dynasty state.

The Zhou Dynastic Order. The Zhou Dynasty was understood to be the third in a series of long lived dynasties, ruling over a single empire, which occupied a more or less constant territorial space, at least conceptually. The three dynasties were called the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou.* While the historical status of the Xia is unclear, we know for certain that a large region of what is today northern and central China was governed by the Shang royal house. The boundaries of the area it controlled shifted over time, and the nature of Shang control seems to have been relatively loose, but we know that the Shang royal house consolidated its power in the sixteenth century under a ruling king known as Tang, and it sustained a ruling line whose effective power waxed and waned over the centuries until its collapse in 1045 BCE.**

The armies that conquered the Shang belonged to the leader of a border people called the Zhou, who lived in the far west of the region of Shang influence. The Zhou people had migrated and become part of the Shang polity only a few generations earlier. If the people near the center of the Shang state viewed themselves as "civilized," the Zhou were probably viewed as barbarians. However, in 1099 an exceptionally charismatic man had become leader of the Zhou tribe and had embarked on a program to reform his people and emulate Shang culture. He is known posthumously as King Wen, or "the cultured king." Shortly after King Wen's death in 1050, his son led the campaign that overthrew the last Shang ruler, whom historical accounts (written by the Zhou) picture as a bestial tyrant. The son was known as King Wu, or "the martial king." Having conquered the Shang, King Wu laid claim to all the territory formerly controlled by the former dynasty.

While we do not have a clear idea of what the form of the Shang polity actually was, we do know it was not the type of strong, centralized entity we think of as a territorial state. It seems more closely to have resembled a confederacy of groups that traditionally acknowledged the Shang as its dominant member. The Zhou founders, having proved the ultimate weakness of this arrangement, set about to build a different kind of structure that would consolidate their power. Members of the royal clan and its close supporters were granted authority, by the king, to establish garrisoned control of those regions of former Shang domains that were distant from the royal capital of Zong-Zhou, the Zhou homeland in the far west (near modern Xi'an). Although territorial leaders allied with the conquering armies of the Zhou were allowed to retain local control, as subjects of the Zhou, large regional districts in central and eastern China came under the military dominance of new governing authorities, designated by the Zhou to rule over those regions on a hereditary basis, as extensions of the royal aristocracy. Some of the major states of Mencius's day, such as the state of Qi, where Mencius's career reached its peak, began as such

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*The Shang Dynasty, for reasons that are poorly understood, was also known as the Yin Dynasty, which is the name used in the *Mencius* (though in comments I use the more familiar name of Shang).

**The year of the conquest is disputed. Most historians now use 1046 or 1045. I follow the *Cambridge History of Ancient China* on this point, rather than the more recent "Xia, Shang, Zhou Chronology Project."

garrisoned outposts (see 6B.8). In addition, the Zhou established a second capital in central China, Cheng-Zhou (near modern Loyang), which permitted armies under direct royal control to extend their reach and keep order (see Map 2).

This system, often misnamed "Zhou feudalism" (it has little in common with European feudalism), proved more effective in consolidating power than Shang political structures. While we know from written records of the last two centuries of the Shang that part of the king's ordinary role was to wage domestic wars against rebellious groups within the empire, during the initial centuries of Zhou rule, inscriptional records suggest that when Zhou armies fought, it was generally in wars of expansion, and that the Zhou empire was, in general, a vast zone of relative peace under strong, centralized power. In its era of greatness, from the mid-eleventh to the mid-ninth century, the Zhou state was probably the largest and most peaceful empire the world had then ever seen.

Because of their accomplishments, both King Wen and King Wu were honored by later generations as sages, whose wisdom shaped the Zhou era of peace. However, although King Wu had founded this state, he did not live to see its full formation. He died suddenly in 1043, only two years after the conquest, at a time when his son and heir was a boy too young to rule. Fortunately for the Zhou, King Wu's younger brother, a man remembered as the Duke of Zhou, stepped in to act as regent for the young king. Initially, this act was perceived as a power grab by some of King Wu's other brothers, who had been sent out to govern from garrisoned strongholds in the east. These brothers attacked the armies of the Duke of Zhou in a civil war that lasted three years and almost split the new state (2B.9). In the end, the Duke prevailed, and in 1035 he fulfilled the pledge with which he had first taken power and passed the state intact to his nephew, who had come of age, withdrawing himself from the capital and the political stage, and act with few analogues in history. Because the detailed design and implementation of the new Zhou state was actually accomplished under the Duke of Zhou's regency, later generations granted him a full share of the credit for the state's success, and he was viewed as a third founding sage, beside his father King Wen and brother King Wu.

<u>The Order Lost</u>. From the mid-ninth century, the Zhou state fell prey to both internal and external pressures and in the year 771 the era of consolidated Zhou rule came to an end. Raiders from the steppe north of the Zhou homeland penetrated the defenses of Zong-Zhou. The capital was sacked, the king killed, and the heir to the Zhou throne was carried to safety by members of the Zhou aristocracy, who placed him in a secondary capital, Cheng-Zhou, which the Duke of Zhou had established as an eastern military base for elements of the royal army centuries earlier. After that time, the Zhou kings were effectively the puppets of the landed aristocracy. The descendants of those branches of the royal aristocracy and its close allies who had been granted the rights to hereditary governance of districts under the early Zhou became de facto rulers in their own right. Although the Zhou royal house continued until 256 to rule in name over all the territories of the old empire, in fact, its only real power was exercised over a tiny kingdom around the eastern capital. From 771 to 221, no ruler governed more than a fraction of the old

Zhou territorial state – the large polity ancestral to what we mean today by "China." The era was, in fact, a 550 year-long period of increasingly intense civil war among a changing cast of combatant polities, during which heirs to the powerful lords granted demesnes by the old Zhou kings battled to extend their domains and succeed to the actual power of the old Zhou empire.

Because during the era of disunity the powerless Zhou king dwelt in the old eastern Zhou capital, we call that era the "Eastern Zhou," and often extend its date a few decades past the actual end of the Zhou royal house to 221, the year in which the state of Qin completed its reunification of China. By contrast, the era of Zhou unity is called the "Western Zhou." The Eastern Zhou era of 771-221 is itself divided in two by historians. The early portion is called the "Spring and Autumn Period," named after a court record, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which chronicles the years 722-481. The latter portion is called the "Warring States Period," also after a text, the *Zhanguo ce* or "Intrigues of the Warring States." The division between these two eras is somewhat arbitrary. In this translation, I use the dissolution of the powerful Spring and Autumn era state of Jin in 453 as the dividing point. Thus, the chronology of the entire Zhou era is as follows:

Western Zhou		1045-771
Eastern Zhou		771-221
Spring and Autumn Period	771-453	
Warring States Period	453-221	

Although the year of division between the two Eastern Zhou eras is a matter of convention, the differences between the periods as a whole are real and significant. During the Spring and Autumn era, there was a continually shifting balance of power. There were literally hundreds of de facto independent states of varying size, the inheritors of Zhou land grants, traditional territories of Zhou allies, and small statelets that were able to act with autonomy due to the chaotic political environment. Warfare during the Spring and Autumn period was largely a clash of small or moderate size chariot-led armies, with members of the hereditary aristocracy serving as chief combatants, matching their elite skills in chariot-based archery and swordsmanship, supported by small conscript contingents that ran beside their chariots. It was an era of constant bloodshed, but blood flowed in a trickle compared to the era of the Warring States. After 500, chariot warfare gave way to infantry and, occasionally, cavalry warfare. The development of iron technology allowed for a proliferation of metal weaponry among mass conscript infantries, vastly increasing the lethality of combat. The art of war was no longer the personal mastery of charioteering and archery, it lay in an understanding of strategy and tactics, the deployment and provisioning of huge armies, the arts of siege warfare and ruthless diplomacy that could forge momentary alliances among enemies to crush a common foe. The loss of life in war was on a scale not seen again until modern times, and the talents in demand by rulers whose power depended on military success to survive were technocratic, rather than aristocratic.

As these changes gradually evolved, especially during the sixth and fifth centuries, a social transformation took place. Power that had been monopolized by an hereditary elite came to be shared with a growing class of commoners whose intelligence and training equipped them with skills so valuable that rulers would compete to employ them at court in positions of increasingly higher prestige, overlooking their low birth. Over time, hereditary right and merit came to be competing criteria for social position where hereditary right had once held sole sway. Those with hereditary claims who distinguished themselves in society came to be regarded as a distinct class of men, known as *shi* 士, a term translated as "gentlemen" here. *Shi* included men whose talents were in warfare – either as outstanding soldiers and battlefield leaders or as strategists – and also men who specialized in arts of statecraft: tax policy, agricultural technology, diplomacy, or social and political organization. The last group included the men we call philosophers in early China. Only a small number of the men we list as the great names in early Chinese thought were concerned with abstract matters of theory. Most were men whose advanced inquiries into human behavior, social institutions, and political organization were intended to be applied to the problem of restoring to China the unity, stability, and prosperity that was remembered as the lost promise of the Western Zhou.

The Mythical Past. But it was not only the Western Zhou that these thinkers looked back to. The understanding of history during the Warring States era mixed documentary records and accurate facts with distorted traditions and outright myth. The Western Zhou itself was idealized, and the broad practical features of the successful Zhou monarchy were elaborated into detailed, and often competing, models of a finely articulated uniform state. These institutions were projected back into the Shang Dynasty, which was re-envisioned as a preliminary version of the Zhou system. And these were in turn used to reimagine the distant Xia Dynasty, which was not only viewed as an earlier version of the Shang, but whose historical narrative became a retelling of the Shang narrative, each dynasty proceeding from a sagely and virtuous founder to a bestial tyrant, justly overthrown.

Beyond the three dynasties, the retrospective imagination of the Eastern Zhou went further to create a pre-dynastic era of perfect sage rulers, famous characters borrowed from existing myth: Yao, the calendar-maker; Shun, the perfectly loving son of a perfectly evil father; Yu, the flood-tamer who, in some accounts, was born a dragon from the body of his own father, a man whose failure to tame the same great flood had led to his death. These culture heroes were gradually imported into a type of prehistory, and the Warring States era people who narrated their tales built into the story of the origins of civilization the values of the Warring States *shi* class. Yao and Shun, in particular, are pictured inventing technocratic government, appointing "specialists" such as the inventor of agriculture, or the greatest of musicians, or Yu the flood tamer himself, to head bureaus of their courts. And both of those primal rulers were pictured honoring the meritocratic ideal of the *shi* class by passing the throne on to a worthy man, Yao to Shun, Shun to Yu, rather than to his son and heir. The figure of Yu binds this mythical era to the history of the three dynasties: Yu is cast as both a sage earning the throne by merit, and the father

of a sage, whose son's worthy succession to the throne enshrined Yu as the founding king of the Xia, the first of the Three Dynasties.*

A History of Exemplars. For Mencius, as for his contemporaries, this history was the factual foundation of human society and civilization on which a realistic approach to the political crisis of the Warring States era needed to be built. While conditions of the present times were not the same as those in the past, the past alone provided positive and negative models of how society could be transformed and order restored. The positive exemplars from the mythical era were Yao, Shun, and Yu. In historical times, there was Tang, the first dynastic king of the Shang, and the three founders of the Zhou, Kings Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Zhou. And there were negative exemplars as well: the last king of the Xia, named Jie, who was clearly modeled on Zhòu,** the last king of the Shang, as well as the kings judged most responsible for the decline of the Western Zhou, King Li and the final ruler of the unified empire, King You.

For Warring States era thinkers like Mencius, one final group of exemplary rulers was also important. Over the centuries of the Spring and Autumn era, a small number of powerful regional rulers had arisen who were able to form grand alliances among many of the contending states, and who, explicitly posing as defenders of the powerless but legitimate Zhou monarchs of the time, imposed a partial order on the states during the period of their reigns as lords. These men, five in number (but with two of the five variously named) were recalled as "hegemons," the most famous being the initial two, seventh century lords of the states of Qi and Jin. For thinkers like Mencius, these men were both debased imitators of the sage rulers and also positive models of practical accomplishment.

Along with these ruling figures, an assortment of wise ministers, appointed, like the *shi*, on the basis of their virtue and accomplishments, as well as men who proved their virtue by resisting the temptation to serve tyrants, added to the pantheon of sage exemplars. The names of such men, among them Yi Yin, Bo Yi, Liuxia Hui, and above all Confucius, fill out the ethical vocabulary of history that we see in the *Mencius*. Mencius's views of human possibility are reasoned through these positive and negative exemplars. We are all capable of moral perfection because we are all people, just as Yao, Shun, and Yu were people, and they demonstrate the potential innate within each of us. We know that society can be perfected in our day because Kings Wen and Wu, together with the Duke of Zhou, created a perfect society in theirs, and demonstrated the potential of well-led people to enact a utopian order.

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*There were competing narratives of mythical history, the most famous of which, casting the "Yellow Emperor" as the initial sage ruler, was likely in the process of formation in Qi during Mencius's lifetime, and later became most important to Daoism.

**Though the names look alike in transcription, the name of the last Shang ruler, Zhòu 紂, and the name of the dynasty that overthrew him, Zhou 周, were neither pronounced nor written alike in Mencius's day.

CHRONOLOGY OF EXEMPLARY RULERS: SAGES AND TYRANTS

Negative exemplars and Spring & Autumn hegemons in italics.

Legendary	**Xia era (?2000-1600)**	**Shang Dynasty (c. 1600-1045)**	**W. Zhou Dynasty (1045-771)**	**Spring & Autumn era (771-453)**
Yao				
Shun				
Yu →	Yu			
	Jie			
		Tang		
		Wuding (r.c.1250-1189)	King Tai (r. 12th c.)	
		Zhòu (r. 1086-45)	King Wen (r. 1099-50)	
			King Wu (r. 1049-43)	
			[Duke of Zhou (regent, 1042-36)]	
			King Li (r. 857-842)	
			King You (r. 781-771)	
				Duke Huan of Qi (r. 685-643)
				Duke Wen of Jin (r. 636-628)

Mencius's World of Thought

Confucianism. Mencius was a follower of Confucius, who had lived roughly two centuries earlier. Confucius's teachings were significant not only for their content, but because his followers used them to establish a distinct teaching tradition that blossomed into a well defined intellectual school. Confucianism, apart from its ethical and political doctrines, emphasized the essential importance of mastering behavioral forms characteristic of the sages who had created civilization, forms we call "ritual," but which we more central to Confucianism than that word may suggest. The Chinese term for these forms, *li*, denoted all those sanctioned forms of conduct that distinguished well regulated civilized society from the barbarian conduct of nomadic and hunter-gatherer tribes that surrounded the states of the old Zhou empire. These forms extended from everyday etiquette to ceremonials of political and religious practice. Confucians held that the heritage that sage culture heroes left behind them lay precisely in these forms; in their mastery lay the key to becoming a sage oneself, and returning the world to the type of utopian order that had characterized the initial ages of the Three Dynasties and the primordial era of sagely rule. As Mencius puts it: "If you wear the clothes of Yao, chant the words of Yao, and act the acts of Yao, you are simply Yao" (6B.2). Confucians regarded these forms as the key to the future restoration of order: the Dao of human fulfillment, that had been traced by generations of sages and put into practice by dynastic founders. The ethical insights about constructive human relations and social leadership that later students of Chinese thought have seen as central to

Confucianism were originally inextricably entwined with Confucianism's commitment to ritualism. Judging by its usage in early texts, the Chinese term for Confucians, Ru 儒, probably denoted for contemporaries first and foremost a master of ritual form, and only secondarily a person committed to ethical doctrine.

Although Confucius himself was famous for his valiant but unsuccessful political effort to persuade a ruler to adopt his Dao and bring order back to his state and the world, Confucius's disciples and later followers did not follow his example. They used their mastery of ritual to find positions as court ritualists or tutors, or to serve private families as ceremonial masters for weddings, funerals, and so forth. The greatest among them became, like Confucius, transmitters of the Dao – for them, the teachings of the sage rulers of the past – passing it on to the next generation of Ru so that it would be preserved for a future time when society would welcome it once again. The *Analects of Confucius*, which first began to form as a text over this period, was explicit in warning Confucians not to risk the dangers of the cutthroat politics of the era by appearing at courts in times of chaos; two of Confucius's senior disciples had lost their lives in that way. Not until Mencius, a century and a half after Confucius's death, do we see another Ru embark on a sustained effort to seek out a ruler who would implement the Dao by traveling from state to state, forming connections that would lead to an introduction at court with an opportunity to risk offering ethical policy advice to an impatient ruler engaged in high stakes military contests, and to compete for favor and ministerial position openly with other courtiers and vested powers whose enmity could be lethal. (To get a sense of the personal risk involved, see 2B.2.) By the time Mencius took on this role, the shape of both the intellectual and political worlds had changed dramatically from Confucius's day.

Major Challengers to Confucianism: Mohism and Daoism

Mohism. During the fifth century, there was a reaction against the doctrines of Confucius and the spreading school of ritualism he had consolidated. The most prominent anti-Confucian school was Mohism: the followers of Mo Di, whose ideas are represented in the text *Mozi*. Mohists shared the Confucian project of finding a path back to the social and political order seen in the past, and they accepted some of the fundamental ethical values of Confucius, such as celebration of the value of "humanity" (*ren* 仁), but they interpreted their mission and these ethical concepts in an entirely different framework. The Mohists seem to have been the first in China to discover the power of syllogistic reasoning, and they used it to argue for a strict utilitarian ethics, based not on the cultivation of sagely virtue through ritual practice, but on action and policy choices based solely on calculations of optimal impact on social welfare. The style of Mohist thought was entirely new. Whereas Confucius had "pronounced," Mohists argued, and they used their new intellectual tools with such confidence that we repeatedly hear the voice of the *Mozi* telling us that it cannot understand how anyone can hear their reasoning and remain unpersuaded.

Among the features of doctrine that Mohist reasoning formulated were a series of anti-Confucian positions attacking both the ideas and the real-world conduct of the Ru. For Mohists,

ritual was a simple waste of social resources and a distraction from the mission to rescue civilization from the chaos of centuries-long civil war. The Mohists saw the immediate task as stopping war. Like the Confucians, they formed tight-knit communities of specialists to pursue their mission. Unlike Confucians, they specialized in the arts of war, particularly those arts that could defend a state under attack by an aggressor. And also unlike Confucians, Mohists were more than willing to risk their lives confronting the chaos of their day. Training in paramilitary groups, Mohists would travel to courts to persuade aggressive rulers to adopt their pacifist policies, or to offer their military services to rulers whose states had come under attack. Rejecting attachments to family and friends that lay at the core of Confucianism's personalistic ethics, Mohists strove through efforts of disciplined will to overcome narrow sentiments in favor of a type of "universal love" consistent with their utilitarian principles.

Although Mohism became a largely forgotten school within two centuries – most likely because the reunification of China in 221 put an end to the kind of interstate warfare Mohism was designed to combat – it is clear that Mencius regarded Mohists as the most serious challenge to Confucians, and many passages in the *Mencius* are direct and indirect attacks on Mohism. And it is equally clear that waging intellectual warfare against the Mohists, Mencius adopted Mohism's primary tool: argument. Although the *Mencius* is not written in the form of sustained argumentative essays like the *Mozi* (as was the third century Confucian work *Xunzi*), it may be the early text that argues most relentlessly; indeed, in 3B.9 we see that Mencius was viewed as exceptionally disputatious by his contemporaries. Many passages in the *Mencius* involve frontal challenges to Mencius's ideas and personal conduct, which he counters with a broad array of aggressive debate tactics, drawing on logic, authority, and rhetoric. In fact, large portions of the *Mencius* can be read as a debate textbook for Confucian disciples.

<u>Daoism and Yang Zhu</u>. Daoism does not appear to have formed a "school" during the pre-Qin period, but the currents of thought that later came to be denoted as "Daoism" were certainly widespread. It was traditionally believed that the earliest of the great Daoist philosophers was Laozi, author of the *Dao de jing*, who is said to have instructed Confucius. Most Western scholars now regard that tale as a legend and Laozi himself as a fictitious construct, the shadowy sole author of a text that was actually a composite from many anonymous hands, its early components probably the products of the late fifth or fourth centuries, although, like Confucianism, Daoism built upon styles of thinking that may have been much older.

When we speak of early Daoism, we usually mean principally two texts: the *Dao de jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, the latter written by a figure scarcely less shadowy than Laozi, Zhuang Zhou. But there are other texts that seem close to Daoism in spirit, such as certain chapters that appear in larger anthologies like the *Almanac of Lü* (*Lüshi chunqiu*) or the *Guanzi*. All of these texts seem to advocate retreat from engagement in society and a rejection of convention, hallmarks of the approach we call Daoist. But there are major differences among these texts. The *Dao de jing* focuses on attuning oneself to an inexorable cosmic order, the Dao; the *Zhuangzi*, which is, in fact, a composite of several types of texts, focuses in its core on systematic skepticism regarding

the possibility of ordinary knowledge of facts and values, and the promise of a variety of approaches to a superior perspective that can provide certainty, or, perhaps, fulfillment in uncertainty. A set of Daoistic chapters in the *Guanzi* focuses on meditational techniques.

Among the approaches associated with Daoism are ideas associated with the figure of Yang Zhu, a prime target of the *Mencius*. Yang Zhu was famous for maintaining that the only imperative for humans was self-preservation, sometimes pictured in a very concrete way as sustaining the undamaged form of the body. Virtually nothing is known about Yang Zhu. In the early 20th century, an eminent Chinese scholar proposed that Yang Zhu's name was actually a distortion of Zhuang Zhou, and that Yangzi and Zhuangzi were the same person. While this has never been a popular theory, half a century later an equally eminent British scholar, A.C. Graham, demonstrated that certain chapters in the *Almanac of Lü* were almost certainly "lost" Yangist texts, and some of these chapters are indeed duplicated in the *Zhuangzi*. When Mencius picks out Yang Zhu's egoistic ideas as a second explicit target, beside the Mohists, he is picking out a figure whom we may regard as marginal among thinkers who might be classified as Daoists. But no one in Mencius's day was called a Daoist, and there existed no identified school of which others might be more central than Yang Zhu. Yangist thought probably serves in the *Mencius* to represent the perceived selfishness of all who taught doctrines advocating social withdrawal and a quest for unity with some form of Nature outside the human sphere.

<u>Other schools</u>

Apart from the challenges of Mohism and Daoism, a variety of other schools of thought proliferated in the interval between Confucius and Mencius. Of these, we see only one other in the *Mencius*, the school of Agriculturists (3A.4). This is somewhat puzzling, because a substantial portion of the book takes place at the capital of the state of Qi, during a period when that city was the recognized center of what we call the "hundred schools" of philosophical thought – an intellectual correlate to centers such as Cordoba under the Umayyad caliphate or Paris after the founding of its great medieval university. By royal policy, Qi provided settled lodgings for masters and disciples associated with any number of other schools, including a range of naturalistic schools, early Legalists, and logicians and philosophers of language. A neighborhood near the city's Jixia Gate was reserved for masters such as these who arrived in Qi seeking patronage, and although Mencius would have been naturally ranked among them, we see in the *Mencius* no recognition of this community, and only one instance of interaction with a famous master drawn from its ranks (6B.4).

One reason for this may be that these masters were recognized as assets to the state, but not to the court, where they held no rank and performed no functions. The mission at the center of the *Mencius* is not the philosophical one for which Mencius is celebrated today, despite the text's rich philosophical discourse; it is political: to transform the world.

Mencius as a Wandering Persuader

During the Warring States era, competition for talented men by states contending for territorial dominance created a market for those who claimed to have critical knowledge. In Mencius's time, men traveled from court to court to advertise their special wisdom or skill, seeking a ruler who would make use of their services and provide them with a salaried position. Although there were examples of natives of one state traveling to another to seek court patronage earlier, Confucius is generally regarded as the initial example of this type of traveling *shi*, beginning his journey just after 500, when he was forced to leave his native state of Lu. Convinced that he possessed the key to successful governance – the Dao, or Way, of the ancient sages – Confucius spent over a decade traveling from court to court, seeking to persuade rulers of the wisdom of his political program, hoping that one would elevate him to a ministerial position that would allow him to transform the governance of the state and, through that exemplary success, the governance of the world.

In the century and a half after Confucius's, the talent market boomed as *shi* increasingly saw opportunities in learning and sought to equip themselves with an art that could attract a rich ruler or warlord's patronage. The nephew of King Xuan of Qi, the king whom Mencius served as an advisor, is said to have had a thousand *shi* in his employ, all specialists in some skill that appealed to their wealthy patron.

Confucians during this period seem generally to have heeded cautionary warnings of the *Analects* and refrained from competing for court positions of political influence. As we read in 2A.1, Mencius regarded the issue differently, believing that conditions of social chaos had reached an extreme that created new opportunities for moral influence that did not exist in Confucius's time. Picking up the political mission that Confucius had abandoned at the end of his life, Mencius joined the ranks of *shi* who traveled from court to court, offering their skills in practical administration and in war. These men came to be known as "wandering persuaders" (*youshui zhi shi* 遊說之士), honored or rejected on the basis of the sales pitch, or "persuasion," that they delivered to rulers willing to receive them. In 7A.9, we see Mencius specifically counsel another persuader, who liked to "wander" in this way. Book 1 of the *Mencius* is mostly devoted to an episodic narrative of Mencius's persuasions to some of the most powerful rulers of his time. We can see in those persuasions many elements of Mencius's ethical philosophy, but his goal was not to persuade rulers that his theories were correct: he was trying to persuade them to act.

While there was some overlap between masters who developed or transmitted traditions of thought to disciples and men who offered themselves for hire at courts, most of those with whom Mencius was competing for rulers' attentions were the types of upwardly mobile *shi* mentioned earlier: experts in statecraft, diplomacy, military strategy, agricultural policy, and so forth. In the *Mencius*, several long passages illustrate how Mencius presented himself as an expert on some of these topics as well, offering accounts of what were probably even more

detailed discourses on proper administrative structures and land distribution policies, always couched in the language of historical precedent (examples would be 3A.3 and 5B.2).

As a moralist seeking access to power, Mencius was in the difficult position of distinguishing himself from the self-interested careerists who filled the common ranks of persuaders. His solution was to make heavy demands on rulers before he would consent to the interviews that he was seeking. Arriving in a state, he would find initial lodging with a family of standing, and as news of the presence of this famous Confucian reached the court, Mencius would await messages from rulers and other power holders, declining to appear in audience or even to accept a welcoming gift until these overtures demonstrated respect and ritual observance commensurate with his standards. These demands that powerful men humble themselves before Mencius's moral authority delayed his access to courts could get him into serious trouble (see 2B.2), but they clearly distinguished him from other persuaders. The rules that Mencius applied in such cases seemed so ad hoc and inconsistent to others that few issues recur with more frequency in the *Mencius* than requests to explain his behavior in this regard.

As we read the *Mencius*, there is a temptation to seek out portions that seem purely philosophical, separating them from contexts of practical persuasion, received wisdom, and self-justification, in order to fill out a fully articulated structure of theory. But it is truer to the text to read it not as a philosophical architecture to be detached from the decoration of biographical narrative, but as a portrait of an engaged philosopher, whose ideas we see only adapted in pursuit of a social mission, and never in theoretical isolation outside the narrative.

But it should be noted that while the translation here adopts this approach as a governing framework for interpretation, it has traditionally been more common to analyze the *Mencius* as the expression of a fully articulated theoretical structure, imperfectly and incompletely expressed but self-consistent throughout, a perspective that continues to be common today, and that has produced impressive scholarship. Such approaches will not accord with the more pragmatic view of the *Mencius* reflected in much of the commentary in this translation, which follows a strand of interpretive history that views Mencian ethics as essentially situational.

Mencian Thought as a Situational Ethics of Virtue

While the *Mencius* introduces us to a variety of specific doctrines that were central to Mencius's thought, there is one theme of overriding importance, reflective of the text's roots in a practical mission, that pervades the book so thoroughly that it may sometimes be overlooked. That theme is that ethics can never be reduced to rules: ethics most fundamentally pertains to human dispositions and the ability to detect and act on them. Ethics is a matter of character, not rules. This is most directly expressed in what is sometimes called the "doctrine of Timeliness," which, most simply, holds that the correct action in any particular situation can only be assessed in context. Each context is a "time" (*shí* 時), and to apply a good general rule at the wrong time is an ethical error. For all but a few who may be "born sages" (and all of these are mythical), long training in the behavioral norms of ritual designed by great exemplars of the past can cultivate a

character that has both the firm moral compass and the nuanced sensitivity to situational context that are necessary to read prescripts for action out of the living world as it is encountered dynamically.

This doctrine of Timeliness is explicitly encountered only once in the *Mencius*, in 5B.1, where the master sage Confucius is compared to lesser sages, each of whom was known for a particular moral rule that was thematic to their lives. Confucius is unique because he alone has no rule, he simply acts ethically according to context: he is the “Sage of Timeliness.” Elsewhere, the same idea is captured through another metaphor: the doctrine of Balancing. This notion is provided in passages such as 4A.17 and 6B.1, where the question concerns the degree to which ritual rules are to be followed, and the answer is that one must always find a balance between fidelity to rules and awareness of consequences. The balance is something that can be weighed only by the discretion of the actor, and only the person trained in the sagely arts can act as an unerring scale.

These ideas illuminate the text’s portrait of Mencius as a man whose apparently inconsistent and erratic actions seem consistently mysterious to even his closest followers and friends. When explaining his conduct, Mencius frequently invokes rules, and application rules, and conditions under which the application rules may not apply – it can make us think, “This guy has an answer for everything, but it sounds like he’s just making things up as he goes along.” And that is probably the best way to think of these cases. It seems to be an axiom of the text that Mencius’s judgment is unerring, a product of his trained character and the perfection of the forms in which he was trained. The rules that “rationalize” his conduct are implicit, derived from his behavior; his behavior is no longer governed by explicit rules because, like Confucius, he has transcended them.

This form of ethical doctrine is an ethics of virtue, where rules are used to cultivate virtue which, in turn, supersedes rules and acts according to an aesthetics of moral judgment. Those acts become the basis of new rules, which those aspiring to virtue can emulate, until they are ready to supersede them in turn. Ethical choices can never be reduced to reason, as the Mohists wish them to be: every moral choice is a response to a situation unique in its particularity, and no rationally designed set of rules can ever exhaust the infinite conditions governing each context, or the infinite contexts a person encounters in the course of life. In this respect, Mencian ethics is representative of most Confucian ethics, and the polar opposite of the rationalistic utilitarianism of the Mohist school.

Major Doctrines

Mencius is famous for a number of specific doctrines. While his thought is much too rich to reduce to a few keywords, I think it is useful in this brief introduction to highlight two that had a particularly strong influence on Chinese thought: his theory of human nature and his belief that the purpose of government was to reflect and serve the interests of the common people.

<u>Human Nature is Good</u>. Mencius was probably most famous in his own era for his claim that humans were, by nature, morally good. Only a few decades after Mencius's death, the last of the great pre-Qin Confucians, Xunzi, made Mencius a chief target by challenging him with the counter-claim that human nature is bad. Mencius's arguments about human nature are laid out in most detail in Book 6A, but by far his most interesting demonstration of his claim is a thought experiment offered in 2A.6, exploring what experience and imagination can tell us about the universality of human responses, taking as his example instant reactions to sudden exposure to a scene of imminent danger affecting a person we observe, rather than ourselves. Mohists had pioneered the method of argument through detailed thought experiment, and in this case Mencius uses these Mohist tactics to argue for an ethical ground in human dispositions, as opposed to ethical rules. Having provided evidence in this way for the universality of one particular type of spontaneously affective human response, Mencius goes on to claim identical universality for others, and to argue that these responses are the defining features of our natures as humans, while other responses, such as our appetites for food and sex, are not (6A.6, 7B.24).

<u>Political Populism</u>.

Like virtually every thinker in early China – as in later imperial China – Mencius believed that there should and would be kings. But Mencius articulated rationales for kingship and the process of royal accession that had great influence. Mencius held that kings only enjoyed mandates to rule to the extent that they governed to the benefit of those whom they ruled. He insisted that the population was the most important component of the state, not the king (7B.14), and that rulers who abandoned this charge were, in effect, no longer rulers: of the murder of the tyrannical last king of the Shang he denied that any act of regicide was involved, saying that an outcast had been executed, not a ruler (1B.8). Mencius was an advocate for public welfare as a state concern, noting that it was unrealistic to expect people to behave in an ethical and lawful manner if they lacked the means to survive except through selfishness or theft (e.g., 1A.7), and he accused rulers who punished small transgressions while failing to fulfill their own responsibilities as entrapping their people (1B.2, 3A.3).

Mencius's populism was extended to his notion of divine force behind history. In a long discussion of the way that the supreme heavenly deity, Tian, guides succession to the throne of the unified empire, Mencius claimed that Tian worked through the action of the people, and in this way, the will of the people has divine status in Mencius (5A.5).

Because the notion of active democracy was not alive in any form in early China, Mencius's populism cashes out as a theoretical right to revolution, or, given the concentration of military power in aristocratic hands, a license for disaffected patricians to mobilize armies of dissatisfied commoners to test whether the will of Tian and of the people would pass the throne to them through war. But even in this form, Mencius expected the doctrine to have cautionary impact on hereditary rulers, steering them towards policies better aligned with the political Dao

that Confucians advocated, ones that would attract mass support, and that was, after all, Mencius's mission.

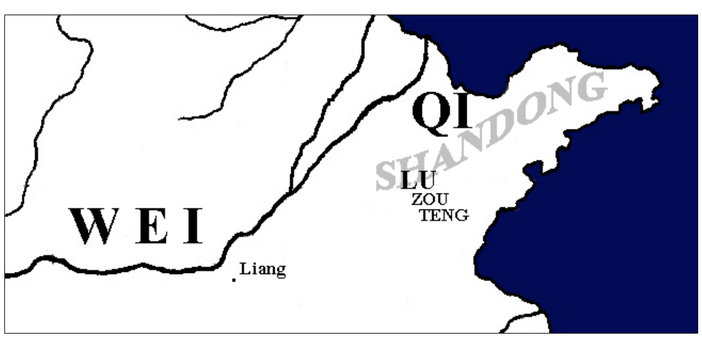
Beyond these two themes, the *Mencius* conveys an abundance of powerful and influential ideas on such topics as the guiding force of Tian and its relation to destiny and the limits of human agency, the dynamic of individual will and its relation both to our bodies and to our thought and feelings, and the social nature of persons and its reflection in structures of human society. And throughout the text, Mencius provides us with sensitive and highly nuanced insights into the motives and interactions of individual people. Mencius's greatness was clearly something more than intellectual: while the man we see in the text can be egotistical, abrasive, and severe in his judgments, we also see frequent evidence of thoughtful empathy and an ability to understand the complex motives and constraints on other people, which add authenticity to the message that our goal must not be merely to hold right views, but is to become fully humane people.

BOOK 1
KING HUI OF LIANG
INTRODUCTION

The biographical elements of the Mencius – and there are more of these than in any other early Chinese text – are entirely related to Mencius's career as a "wandering persuader," a thinker who traveled from court to court seeking a ruler who would employ his political and ethical ideas and give Mencius some position of authority to implement them. Book 1 (both parts A and B), is generally taken to be a chronologically arranged set of snapshots of this endeavor. It is, in this way, more unified than any other book of the Mencius.

The book opens with Mencius first meeting with the long-ruling King Hui (r. 370-319) of Liang (that is, the great state of Wei, whose capital was at Liang), who, for much of his reign, was the most powerful ruler of his day. The King was old when he met Mencius, about 325 B.C., but he addresses Mencius as though he were older still, suggesting that at the start of his effort to travel in search of a ruler who would listen to his ideas, Mencius was already advanced in years. Mencius was a native of the small state of Zou on the Shandong Peninsula, and although there are some legends about the young Mencius, we know next to nothing certain about his life before he began to travel from court to court, seeking a ruler who would appoint him to high position and adopt the Confucian policies of humane governance that Mencius believed reflected ideal eras of the past. In the Analects, we see Confucius advise that when the way of these past eras does not prevail and the world is in chaos, the moral man bides his time in obscurity, waiting for signs of incipient order to signal that opportunities for moral progress exist. It may be that in the tumultuous era of the Warring States, Mencius followed this principle until, late in life, he came to believe that the duration and extremity of warfare and treachery that surrounded him were themselves signs of moral opportunity, a notion that is explicit in passages such as 2A.1, 2B.13, and 7B.38. From that point, Mencius became a "wandering persuader," one of many men who traveled from court to court, seeking a ruler who would follow their advice and, they believed, thus restore order to the world by reviving the unified polity that had formerly constituted the empires of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties.

Scholars disagree about when and where Mencius's life as a persuader began, but Book 1 seems to present its own unified picture of his career. After 1A.1 opens in Wei in the late 320s (all dates are BCE), in 1A.6 we learn why Mencius left Wei after 319, shifting to the state of Qi, in northern Shandong, where 1A.7 and 1B.1-11 are set. The later passages are set in various states of southern Shandong: Zou (1B.12), Teng (1B.13-15), and Lu (1B.16), where Mencius's career seems to end in disappointment, as it will, in other forms, at the close of Books 2 and 7.



BOOK 1
KING HUI OF LIANG
PART A

1A.1 Mencius appeared in audience before King Hui of Liang. The King said, "Aged Sir, you have not regarded a thousand *li* as too great a distance to travel here – surely it must be that you have come to profit my state!"

Mencius replied, "Your Majesty, why must you speak of profit? Indeed, there is nothing but humanity and right. If Your Majesty says, 'Whereby may I profit my state?' your grandees shall say, 'Whereby may I profit my family?' and your gentlemen and common people shall say, 'Whereby may I profit myself?' When those higher and lower compete with one another for profit, the state will be in danger. In a state of ten thousand war chariots, the man who assassinates the ruler will surely have a family estate of one thousand; in a state of one thousand war chariots, the man who assassinates the ruler will surely have a family estate of one hundred. Such men have a tenth share of the state's force, and this is by no means a little. But if right is placed to the rear and profit to the fore, such men will never be satisfied unless they seize it all. Never has a man of humanity abandoned his parents, and never has a man of right put himself before his ruler.

"May Your Majesty simply speak of humanity and right. Why must you speak of profit?"

1A.1 A "*li*" is a unit of distance; about ⅓ of a mile.

"Humanity" (*ren*) and "Right" (*yi*) are key terms in the *Mencius*. See the **Glossary**.

On the terms "grandee" (*dafu*) and "gentleman" (*shi*), see the **Glossary**.

Among the states of Mencius's day, size and strength were measured in terms of war chariots.

1A.2 Mencius appeared in audience before King Hui of Liang. The King was standing by a pond in his park land, gazing at the deer and wild geese around it. "Do worthy men also delight in things such as this?" he asked.

Mencius replied, "Only when one is worthy may one delight in them; though the unworthy may possess them, they cannot take delight in them. The *Poetry* says:

> The King began his Magic Tower,
> Planning it and spanning it,
> The people set themselves to work,
> In no time it was done!
> He started it with no great haste,
> The people simply came.
> The King was in his Magic Park,
> The deer and doe lay all around,
> The deer and doe all glistening sleek,
> The white birds gleaming bright.
> The King was at his Magic Pond,
> How full with leaping fish!

1A.2 "Worthy men" (*xian*) translates a key ethical term for the *Mencius*. See the **Glossary.**

The *Mencius* frequently cites two well known texts that Confucians regarded as authoritative classics: the *Book of Poetry* and the *Book of Documents*, so familiar in Mencius's time that they are referred to simply as the *Poetry* and *Documents*. For information on these texts, see the **Glossary**.

The king in the poem is King Wen, a sage ruler of the Zhou royal

The King relied upon the labor of the people to build his tower and his pond, and the people took joyful delight in it. Hence they called his tower the Magic Tower and his pond the Magic Pond, delighting in the deer and fish that were there.

"The men of old shared their delight with the people – that is why they knew delight. But the 'Oath of Tang' says:

> When shall this sun die,
> That I may share death with you?

The people then so wished the ruler's death.

"Though one may have towers, pools, birds and beasts, how can you enjoy them alone?"

1A.3 King Hui of Liang said, "My attitude towards my state is simply to exhaust my every effort on its behalf. If in Henei there is famine, I move people to Hedong and grain to Henei, and likewise also if the case is reversed. When I examine governance in neighboring states, none is as conscientious as mine. Yet the population of those states does not decrease and that of mine does not increase. Why is this so?"

Mencius replied, "Your Majesty loves war, so let me use an analogy from war to explain. Picture the drums beating your soldiers into battle – the swords of the armies have clashed! Suddenly, your men strip off their heavy armor and run, trailing their weapons behind them. Some run for a hundred paces, others stop after fifty. If the men who had retreated only fifty paces began to laugh at those who had run a hundred, what would you think of them?"

"That they were wrong to do so! They haven't run a hundred paces, but they've still run away."

Mencius said, "If Your Majesty understands this, then you need not look for the population of your state to grow over those of your neighbors.

"If a state does not interfere with the people during the growing season, there will be more grain than the people can eat. If you regulate fishing nets so that fine-woven ones may not be used in the pools and ponds, there will be more fish than the people can eat. If you allow hatchets and axes to be used in the woods only in proper season, there will be more lumber than the people can use. When there is more grain and fish than the people can eat and more lumber than the people can use, the people can nourish their living and mourn their dead without regrets: this is the root of the Dao of the True King.

"When on every five *mu* homestead a mulberry tree is planted, people fifty and over are able to wear silk clothes. When chicken, pigs, and dogs are bred in a timely way, all who are

house. For an overview of the historical and mythical background of Mencius's view of the past, see **Introduction: Mencius's World of History**.

The "Oath of Tang" is a chapter in the *Book of Documents*. The cited passage expresses the people's feelings about a wicked ruler: the last king of the Xia Dynasty.

1A.3 Henei and Hedong were regions within King Hui's state. (The name of the state was Wei, but it is referred to in King Hui's title by the name of its capital city, Liang. For information on places mentioned in the texts, see the **Index of Places** and the **Maps**.

On the terms "Dao" (Way) and "True King," see the **Glossary**.

A *mu* is a measure of area, under a fifth of an acre, or the size of a large vegetable garden.

seventy and over have meat to eat. If laborers in fields of a hundred *mu* are not taken from their fieldwork during growing season, then families with many mouths to feed will never go hungry. When the education given in village schools is extended by the example of behavior that is filial to parents and deferential to elders, then none with white hair will carry heavy loads along the roads. There has never been a ruler who did not rule as a True King when those seventy and older wore silk and ate meat, and when the people were never hungry or cold.

"But now, when food is plentiful, dogs and pigs eat the people's food and none know to garner and store it; when food is scarce, people starve by the roadside and none know to open the storehouses and distribute grain. When men die, you say, 'It is not I – it is the weather's fault!' How is this different from running them through with a spear and saying, 'It was not I – it is the spear's fault!'

"Once Your Majesty ceases to blame the weather, people will come to you from everywhere in the world."

1A.4 King Hui of Liang said, "I am most eager to receive instruction from you."

Mencius replied, "Is there a difference between killing a man with a club or a sword?"

The King said, "None."

"Is there a difference between killing him with a sword or with bad government?"

"None"

Mencius said, "There are fat meats in your kitchens and fat horses in your stables, but the people are pale with hunger and corpses lie in the wastelands. This is to lead beasts and devour people. People detest it even when beasts eat beasts. To be the father and mother of the people and yet, in your governance, to fall to leading beasts and devouring people – well, wherein then are you 'the father and mother of the people?' Confucius said, 'May he who first fashioned figurines to be interred with the dead be without descendants!' He said this because these forms were made in the image of people and so used. What would he have said for one who led people to starvation and death?"

1A.5 King Hui of Liang said, "As you know well, Sir, there was no state so powerful as Jin. But now, during my reign, we have been defeated by Qi in the east – my son and heir was killed in that war – and in the west, Qin has taken from us seven hundred square *li* of territory, while Chu has humbled us in the south. I am ashamed of this, and I wish to wash away this disgrace on behalf of those who have died. What should I do?"

Filiality (*xiao*: the dutiful conduct of children towards parents) and deference to elders (*ti*: learned through sibling behavior in families) are building blocks of morality in Mencius. The **Glossary** provides details.

The term "the world" (*tianxia*) may refer to all of the known world or only to the area ruled by former kings of unified China. See the **Glossary**.

1A.4 The custom of burying figurines, representing people who can act as servants in the afterlife, is usually understood as a humane replacement for the prior practice, by powerful members of society, of burying actual people to per-form that role. Here, however, the idea is that the figurines were an initial embodiment of a willingness to sacrifice life to improve one's death.

1A.5 Jin was an archaic name for the state of Wei (Liang).

Qi, Qin, and Chu were powerful states of the time. (See map below.)

Mencius replied, "One may reign as a True King from a territory as small as one hundred *li* square. If Your Majesty would only govern the people by means of policies according with humanity, being sparing in punishments, keeping taxes light, encouraging the people to plough deep and weed readily, then the young would have leisure to cultivate the virtues of filiality, deference towards elders, loyalty, and faithfulness. At home, they would serve their parents and elder brothers, abroad they would serve their elders and superiors – such people could beat back the armor and swords of Qin and Chu armed with nothing but pikes.

"Other rulers commandeer the labor of the summer fieldwork so that people have no way to do their ploughing and weeding. Their parents freeze and starve, while brothers, wives, and children are forced to scatter. These rulers entrap their people till they sink and drown. If Your Majesty were to campaign against such rulers, what enemies could be your match? Thus it is said that 'the man of humanity has no enemies' – may Your Majesty never doubt it!"

1A.6 Mencius appeared in audience before King Xiang of Liang. When he emerged, he said to others, "When I first caught sight of him he did not have the look of a ruler of men, and when I approached closer I saw nothing in him to inspire awe. He began by asking me abruptly, 'How can the world be put in good order?'

"I replied by saying, 'It will be put in order through unity.'

"'Who can unify it?'

"I said, 'One who takes no pleasure in killing people.'

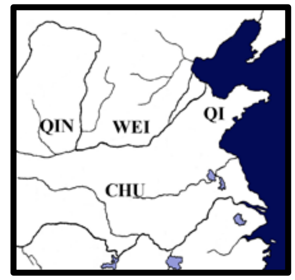
"'Who can deliver it to him?'

"I said, 'No one in the world would refuse to give it to him. Does Your Majesty know how rice plants grow? If there is a summer drought, the seedlings wither. But if clouds rise thick in the heavens and the rain pours down, the seedlings will suddenly swell upright – who could stop them? Now, in the world today there are no leaders who do not take pleasure in killing people. If there were such a one, the people of the world would all straighten their necks to gaze towards him. If he were truly such a man, the people would come to him just as water flows downwards – pouring down with such force, who could stop them?'"

1A.7 King Xuan of Qi asked, "Will you teach me about the great hegemons, Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin?"

Mencius replied, "The disciples of Confucius did not speak of the affairs of these rulers, so later generations of followers had nothing to pass on. I have not learned of them. Failing in this, may I speak to you of True Kingship?"

"What sort of virtue must one have to rule as a True King?"



The term used here for "campaign" (*zheng* 征) is cognate with the term for "to set right" (*zheng* 正), and signals righteous war against a tyrant. The term for "enemy" (*di*) simultaneously means "peer." Having no enemies means having none capable of being equal adversaries. The ruler who goes to war to punish tyranny will encounter no enemy able to withstand him.

1A.6 King Xiang took the throne after his father King Hui's death. This was Mencius's first interview, and judging by the fact that the *Mencius* says nothing more about King Xiang, Mencius must have left the state of Wei soon thereafter.

1A.7 "Hegemon" (*ba*) was an informal title granted to a handful of powerful state rulers during the Spring and Autumn period (771-453 BCE). See the **Glossary**. These two dukes were the greatest of the hegemons. See the **Index of Persons**.

Mencius said, "If one rules by protecting the people, none can stop him."

"Could a man like me rule as a protector of the people?"

"Yes."

"How do you know I could?"

Mencius said, "I heard from your courtier Hu He that when Your Majesty was sitting up in the great hall, an ox was dragged by in the court below, and that seeing it you asked, 'Where are you taking that ox?' Your courtiers told you that it was to be slaughtered and its blood used to anoint a newly cast bell, and you said, 'Spare it. I can't bear to see it whimpering like an innocent man being taken for execution.' And when your courtiers asked whether you wished them not to consecrate the bell you said, 'How can we do away with that? Use a sheep instead.' I wonder whether the story is accurate."

"Yes, it is."

"Well then, your heart is sufficient for you to reign as a True King. The people all thought you spared the ox because you were stingy, but I understand that it was because you could not bear its distress."

The King said, "That's right. That's just what they said. But even though Qi is not a big state, how could I begrudge sacrificing a single ox? It was that I couldn't bear its whimpering like an innocent man being taken for execution, so I told them to substitute a sheep."

"Your Majesty should not be surprised that the people took you to be stingy, since you substituted a smaller animal for a large one. How could they know? If your concern was that they were being executed despite their innocence, what difference would there be between an ox and a sheep?"

The King laughed. "Really, what was I thinking? I wasn't thinking about the expense when I said to substitute a sheep, but it's natural that the people said I was just being stingy."

Mencius said, "There was no harm in what you did – it was the working of humanity. You had seen the ox, but you had not seen the sheep. For a *junzi*, if he has seen a bird or beast alive, he cannot watch it die; if he has heard its voice, he cannot bear to eat its flesh. This is why the *junzi* keeps his distance from the kitchen!"

The King was pleased. "The *Poetry* says,

> The heart lies within another,
> Yet it is I who takes its measure.

How perfectly this describes you, Sir! When I reflected on my actions, I could not grasp my own mind in this, but your words match perfectly with my feelings at the time. But now tell me how

The term "virtue" (*de*) is a keyword in Mencian ethics. See the **Glossary**.

Qi was a big state, indeed; the King is formulaically using humble language.

The term *junzi*, which denotes a type of ideal moral person, is a key ethical term for the *Mencius*. Some translators render it with an English phrase such as "noble man," but it will be left in transcription here. See the **Glossary** for more.

such feelings accord with one who rules as a True King."

Mencius said, "If someone said to Your Majesty, 'I have strength enough to lift half a ton, but not to lift a feather; vision clear enough to observe the tip of a hair but not a load of firewood,' would you accept what he said?"

"No."

"Well then, why would one accept that Your Majesty's kindness could extend even to the birds and beasts, but its works could not extend to the people? If one cannot lift a feather it is because he won't use his use strength; if one cannot see a cartload of firewood it is because he won't use his sight. If the people have no protector it is because you are not using your kindness. Hence, Your Majesty does not rule as a True King only because you will not, not because you cannot."

The King said, "How are being unwilling and unable truly different?"

"When it comes to picking up Mt. Tai and carrying it over the Northern Sea, if you tell someone, 'I can't do it,' it is because you truly are not able. When it comes to helping an elderly man crack his joints, if you tell someone, 'I can't do it,' it means you're unwilling to do it, not that you truly are unable. That Your Majesty does not rule as a True King is not a matter of carrying Mt. Tai over the Northern Sea, it is like being unwilling to help an old man crack his joints.

"Treat your aged kin as the elderly should be treated, and then extend that to the treatment of the aged kinsmen of others; treat your young kin as the young should be treated, and then extend it to the young children of others. If you do this, you will be able to govern the world as though you turned it in your palm. The *Poetry* says:

> An exemplar in treating his wife,
> And extending to his brothers,
> Thus he ruled the family and the state.

What this is speaking of is taking one's own heart and applying it in the treatment of others. If you extend your kindness it will be enough to protect all within the Four Seas of the world; if you don't extend your kindness, you can't even protect your wife and children. The reason that the ancients so far exceeded other men is none other than this: they excelled in extending what they did. Now, why is it that you are kind enough in your treatment of birds and beasts, but your works do not extend to the people?

"Only when you when you put a thing on a scale can you know how much it weighs; only after you measure something can you know how long it is. It is so with all things, and the heart more than others. I urge Your Majesty to measure your heart in this

way!"

Mencius continued, "But perhaps Your Majesty's heart is only content when you have mobilized your troops, imperiled your subjects, and incited the resentment of other lords."

"No," said the King. "How could this bring me contentment? It is just that I wish to attain my great desire."

"May I hear what this desire may be?"

The King smiled but did not speak.

Mencius said, "Is it that you lack rich foods that satisfy your palate, fine clothes that bring comfort to your body, colorful décor that can bring pleasure to your eyes, beautiful music to stimulate your ears, or court favorites to carry out your every order? Surely your royal officers could supply such wants – surely these are not what you mean."

"No," said the King. "It is not because of such things."

"In that case, I can guess Your Majesty's great desire. It is to broaden your territories, to have the rulers of Qin and Chu pay homage at your court, to stand at the center of the states and subdue the barbarians beyond the borders in all directions. But to pursue these ambitions by the means you now employ is like trying to catch fish by climbing a tree."

The King said, "Is it as bad as that?"

"Likely worse! Climbing a tree in search of fish, though you will find no fish, no disaster will follow. Using your methods to seek your ambitions, if you exhaust your heart's effort in the pursuit, disaster will surely follow."

"May I hear more?"

Mencius said, "If the state of Zou fought the state of Chu, whom does Your Majesty think would prevail?"

"The men of Chu would prevail."

"Precisely so. And this is because the small is inherently no match for the large, the few are no match for the many, and the weak are no match for the strong. Within all the four quarters, there are only nine regions of a thousand square *li* each, and your state of Qi commands altogether only one of these. To subdue eight by means of one – how is this different from little Zou trying to be a match for Chu? Indeed, you must instead reexamine the root of the matter.

"If Your Majesty were now to proclaim policies that were governed by humanity, you would cause all the warriors in the world to wish they could attend Your Majesty at court, all the tillers in the world to wish they could till Your Majesty's lands, all the merchants in the world to wish they could collect at Your Majesty's markets, all the travelers in the world to wish they could journey on Your Majesty's roads. Everyone in the world who feels distress because of their rulers would wish to come denounce them

In the Warring States era (453-221 BCE), the various states contending for power were ruled by men referred to as "lords," or the "many lords" (*zhuhou*). See the **Glossary**.

The state of Zou (Mencius's native state) was very small, just a few miles square, while Chu dominated most of the Yangzi River valley. See the **Index of Place Names** and **Maps**.

before Your Majesty. If this were so, who could stop them?"

The King said, "I am slow witted – I can't think through your strategy. I ask you, Sir, to assist me in my goals and instruct me in plain terms. Though I am not quick, please make the attempt."

Mencius said, "Only a gentleman can maintain a constant heart without constant means. For the common people, if they have no constant means of support, they cannot sustain their hearts' resolve. Without the constant resolve of the heart, they will slip into excesses and deviant behavior, stopping at nothing. Now to allow them to fall into criminal ways in this manner and only then to punish them is to entrap the people. Whenever has there been a man of humanity in authority who set traps for people?

"The enlightened ruler regulates the people's means of support, ensuring that these are sufficient for them to serve their parents and nurture their wives and children. Through good years, they will always have enough to eat their fill; in bad years, they will at least escape starvation. Then, when he guides them towards goodness, the people will find it no burden to follow.

"But now, regulation of the people's means of support does not provide them goods sufficient to serve their parents or nurture their wives and children. They live through good years in bitterness and in bad years they cannot escape starvation. In this way, they live in fear that nothing they can do will stave off death – where would they find the time to attend to matters of ritual and right?

"If Your Majesty wishes to put these matters into practice, reexamine the root of the matter. When on every five *mu* plot of land a mulberry tree is planted, those fifty and over are able to wear silk clothes. When chicken, pigs, and dogs are bred in a timely way, all who are seventy and older have meat to eat. If laborers in fields of a hundred *mu* are not taken from their fieldwork during growing season, then even families with eight mouths to feed will never go hungry. When a ruler attends to the education given in village schools and sees that it is extended by the example of behavior that is filial to parents and deferential to elders, then none with white hair will carry heavy loads along the roads. There has never been a ruler who did not rule as a True King when the aged wore silk and ate meat, and when the people were never hungry or cold."

b b b

"Ritual" (*li*) is one of the most important concepts for the *Mencius* and for all Confucian texts. Confucians were, as a group, professional experts in traditional ritual, and they viewed *li* as a key to self-perfection and transformation of the world. Although the English term "ritual" sometimes denotes a trivial thing ("mere ritual"), reading the *Mencius* requires that the force of ritual in ancient China be kept in mind. See the **Glossary** for more.

BOOK 1
KING HUI OF LIANG
PART B

1B.1 Zhuang Bao went to see Mencius and said, "I had an audience with the King and he told me he loved music. I didn't know how to respond. What is the significance of loving music?"

Mencius said, "If the King loves music deeply, then the state of Qi is not far from the mark!"

On another day, when Mencius was in audience with the King he said, "You told Zhuang Bao that you liked music. Is that really so?"

The King blushed. "I'm not capable of appreciating the music of the ancient kings. I just like common music."

"If Your Majesty loves music deeply, then the state of Qi is not far from the mark! The music of today comes from the music of the past."

"May I learn more of this?"

Mencius said, "Which gives more pleasure: enjoying music alone or enjoying it in the company of others?"

"In the company of others."

"In the company of a few or in the company of many?"

"In the company of many."

Mencius said, "Let me explain enjoyment to Your Majesty. Let's say you are holding a musical performance, and when the people hear the sound of the bells and drums, pipes and flutes, they all raise their heads quickly with furrowed brows and say to one another, 'How can our King enjoy music and allow us to come to such dire straits that fathers and sons are parted and do not see one another, and brothers, wives, and children are scattered?' Or let us say you go out for the hunt, and when the people hear the sound of chariots and horses and see your beautiful banners waving, they all raise their heads quickly with furrowed brows and say to one another, 'How can our King enjoy hunting and allow us to come to such dire straits that fathers and sons are parted and do not see one another, and brothers, wives, and children are scattered?' The cause of this would be none other than that one has failed to share one's pleasures with the people.

"Now, let us say you are holding a musical performance, and when the people hear the sound of the bells and drums, pipes and flutes, they all raise their heads happily and smiling say to one another, 'Our King must surely be in good health. How ably the music is played!' Or let's say you go out for the hunt and when the people hear the sound of chariots and horses and see your beautiful banners waving, they all raise their heads happily and smiling say

1B.1 For the identity of all those who appear in conversation with Mencius, see the **Index of Persons**. Only significant ones will be identified in notes.

Confucians believed that music was an important cultural force, with moral implications. Sages of the past composed music (performed with dance that often narrated a story) which represented a type of ethical signature. Here, the King confesses he doesn't like that type of music – he enjoys the pop music of his day.

For more on the role of music in Mencius's thought, see the **Glossary**.

When Mencius asks to explain "enjoyment," the word he uses is the same as "music." In Mencius's time, the words sounded alike and were written identically (樂), although later "enjoyment" (*le*) and "music" (*yue*) came to be pronounced very differently.

to one another, 'Our King must surely be in good health. How ably the hunt is pursued!' The cause of this would be none other than that one has shared one's pleasures with the people.

"If Your Majesty would share with the people the pleasures you take, you would rule as a True King."

1B.2 King Xuan of Qi asked, "It is said that King Wen's royal park was seventy *li* square. Is that so?"

Mencius replied, "It is reported so in the histories."

"As big as that!"

"Yet the people felt it was small."

"My park is only forty *li* square. Why then do the people say it is large?"

Mencius said, "King Wen's park of seventy *li* was open to woodcutters and to those who entered to catch pheasants and rabbits. He shared it with the people. Is it any wonder that they considered it small? When I first came to the borders of your state, before presuming to enter it I inquired about its prohibitions. I was informed that there was a park forty *li* square on the outskirts of the capital, where the killing of a deer was treated as an offence comparable to killing a man. This park, then, is merely a forty square *li* trap in the midst of the state. Is it any wonder that the people consider it large?"

1B.3 King Xuan of Qi asked, "Do you have a formula for diplomacy with neighboring states?"

"Mencius replied, "I do. Only a man of humanity is able properly to put his large state at the service of a smaller one. In this way Tang was able to serve the Ge people and King Wen was able to serve the Kunyi people. Only the wise man is able properly to put his small state in the service of a larger one. In this way King Tai was able to serve the Xunyu people and Goujian was able to serve Wu. Those who put the large in the service of the small are those who take joy in Tian; those who put the small in the service of the large are those who act in awe of Tian. Those who take joy in Tian are the protectors of the world; those who act in awe of Tian are the protectors of their states. The *Poetry* says:

> Act in awe of the majesty of Tian
> And in this way protect it."

The King said, "Your words are great! Yet I have a weakness. I have a love of valor."

Mencius replied, "I beg that Your Majesty not be fond of petty valor. To stroke one's sword hilt and glare, saying, 'How dare that man oppose me!' is the valor of the vulgar man, enough only to match a single enemy. Your Majesty, you need to go

1B.2 We met King Wen first in 1A.2, though he was not named. The *Mencius* frequently reasons by historical example. To follow the ideas, consult the **Introduction: Mencius's World of History**. All historical figures are also discussed in the **Index of Persons**.

In Mencius's time, although the kings of the great Zhou Dynasty had long since lost all power, the royal line still sat on a throne, and no new house had come to rule over the old Zhou empire. The Zhou had seized control in 1045 when the Zhou leader, King Wu, overthrew the Shang Dynasty. It was King Wu's father, King Wen, who had transformed the Zhou people into a major power, and he was revered by Mencius as a sagely True King.

1B.3 Tang was the founder of the Shang Dynasty, which ruled a large and somewhat unified state from about 1600 until the Zhou house overthrew it in 1045. Ge was a state next to Tang's original state, prior to his conquest of the earlier Xia Dynasty.

The Kunyi were a non-Chinese people near the Zhou homeland.

King Tai was grandfather to King Wen. See 1B.15 for more information.

beyond this. The *Poetry* says:

The King blazed in anger
And set his troops in ranks
To stop the enemy's march on Ju,
Deepen the blessings of the Zhou,
And answer the wish of the world.

And the *Documents* says: 'Tian sent down the people of the world, and made for them a ruler and thereby a teacher, that he might assist the Lord on High in cherishing them. "In all the four quarters of the world, for the guilty and the innocent, the burden falls on me alone!" Who in all the world dared cross his will?'

"When one man in the world bullied others, King Wu of the Zhou felt ashamed of it. This was the valor of King Wu – and indeed, in a single outburst of rage, he brought peace to the world. Now if you too would bring peace to the world in a single outburst of rage, the people will fear only that you are not fond of valor."

1B.4 King Xuan of Qi received Mencius in the Snow Palace. The King said, "Do worthy men also enjoy pleasures such as this?"

"They do," Mencius replied. "When men fail to obtain pleasure, they denounce their rulers. To do so is wrong. But to serve as a ruler of men and not share one's pleasures with them is also wrong. When a ruler feels joy in the pleasures of his people, then his people also feel joy in their ruler's pleasures. When a ruler worries about the cares of his people, then his people also worry about his cares. When one's joys and one's worries are on behalf of the world, never yet has such a one failed to rule as a True King.

"In the past, Duke Jing of Qi questioned his minister Yanzi, saying, 'I wish to go on tour and visit Mt. Zhuanfu and Mt. Chaowu, proceeding southward along the seacoast to Langye. How should I prepare myself so that my tour may compare to those made by the former kings?'

"'Well asked!' replied Yanzi. 'When the Son of Heaven made royal visits to the lords he was said to be "on hunt round his preserve," which is to say that he looked after the realm he was charged to preserve. When the lords came to pay court to the Son of Heaven, it was said they made an "official account," which was to say that they recounted their performance in office. Visits were never made without purpose. In spring the king oversaw the ploughing, and supplied whatever means were wanting; in fall he oversaw the harvest, and sent supplies wherever yield was insufficient. The Xia had a saying:

If our king made no excursion,
How could we be well?
If our king felt no elation,

Goujian was the fifth century King of Yue. After a devastating defeat by the state of Wu, he restored his state and conquered his old adversary.

Tian is the name of the high Zhou deity. Tian means "sky," and is often translated "Heaven." This is why a Zhou king was called the "Son of Heaven." On Tian, see the **Glossary**.

1B.4 Duke Jing ruled during the Spring & Autumn period (771-453). The places named here were in the state of Qi.

NOTE: Names ending in '-zi' are honorific forms. Yanzi could be rendered "Master Yan." Yanzi is Yan Ying, one of the most famous ministers of the Spring & Autumn period.

The Xia was the first of the three great dynastic houses of early China: the Xia, the Shang (also called the Yin), and the Zhou. The historicity of the Xia as a dynastic house ruling over wide territories is disputed. If such a house existed and corresponded to what the texts say of it, it would have reigned from about 2000 to about 1600.

How could we get help?
With each excursion, each elation,
He sets a measure for the lords.

But it is no longer so today.

Armies march and grain supplies them.
The starving do not eat; the laborer knows no rest.
The people eye their lords with rancor,
Their conduct goes astray.
The lords evade their mandate and drain the people,
While food and drink flow to them like a river.
Draining that is ceaseless and wildness that is wayward:
These are things to dread in lords.

When one follows the flow downstream and never thinks of return, that is what we mean by *draining*; when one follows the flow upstream and never thinks of return, that is what we mean by *ceaseless*; when one follows the hunt in a frenzy, that is what we mean by *wildness*; when one indulges in wine with abandon, that is what we mean by *wayward*. The former kings took no joy in ceaseless draining or wild and wayward conduct. May your majesty proceed as you see fit!'

"Duke Jing was pleased. He announced to his state a great purifying fast and left the palace to camp in the fields beyond the city walls. He ordered that the storage granaries be opened and that the wants of the people be supplied. Then he summoned the grand master of music and said, 'Perform for me music of rulers and subjects sharing mutual joy!' Surely this was the *Shao* music in musical modes of *zhi* and *jue*, danced to the lyric:

What flaw could there be in nurturing the ruler?

Nurturing the ruler: that is to say, loving the ruler."

1B.5 King Xuan of Qi asked, "I have been advised to tear down the Bright Hall. Should I do so or not?"

Mencius replied, "The Bright Hall is the seat of kingly governance. If Your Majesty wishes to practice the governance of a True King, you should not tear it down."

"May I learn more of the governance of a True King?"

Mencius replied, "In past times, when King Wen ruled at the city of Qí, he took only one part in nine as a tax on those who tilled the land, and those who served his government inherited their stipends. At the border, goods in trade were inspected but no fees were levied, no restrictions were placed on the use of fish traps installed by dams and weirs, and penalties for those convicted of crimes never entailed their wives and children. Widows and widowers, orphans and the aged without children to support them,

The type of interpretation seen here – laying great emphasis on glossing words in older texts – is not uncommon in ancient works. It relies on word play not easily translated. (The text is verse is unidentified.)

The *Shao* music was supposedly composed by the legendary sage king Shun. On the importance of music in ancient Chinese culture, see the **Glossary**.

1B.5 The city of Qí is different and far distant from the state of Qi, where King Xuan ruled.

these classes of people without means or others to turn to were always given priority in the proclamations through which King Wen announced his humane policies. The *Poetry* says:

> Well off are the wealthy,
> Grieve for the forsaken.

The King said, "Well said!"

"If Your Majesty thinks well of the words, why do you not follow them?"

"I have a weakness. I have a love of wealth."

Mencius said, "In past times, Gong Liu loved wealth as well. The *Poetry* tells of it:

Gong Liu was a pre-dynastic ruler of the Zhou people.

> Stocking and storing,
> Sealing up grain
> In sacks and in bags,
> Till harmony shone bright.
> Bows and arrows laid out,
> Spears, halberd, and axes,
> At last marching forth.

Not until those who remained at home could rely on full stores of grain and those who went to war carried with them sacks full of provisions did he march on campaign. If Your Majesty's love of wealth were only shared with the people, what hindrance could there be to ruling as a True King?"

The King said, "But I have another weakness. I have a love of women."

Mencius said, "In past times King Tai had a love of women – how he cherished his consort! The *Poetry* tells of it:

Danfu was the name of King Tai; Lady Jiang was his consort.

> Danfu, the Old Duke,
> Galloped west at dawn,
> Along the western waters
> To the land below Mt. Qí,
> Lady Jiang by his side,
> In search of a new home.

And in those days, no young woman could complain she lacked a man and no young man lacked a wife. If Your Majesty's love of women were only shared with the people, what hindrance could there be to ruling as a True King?"

1B.6 Mencius addressed King Xuan of Qi. "Suppose a subject of Your Majesty entrusted his wife and children to a friend and traveled south to Chu, and when he returned, his friend had left his wife and child to suffer in cold and hunger. What should this man do?"

The King said, "Discard him as a friend."

"And what if the Master of the Guard could not keep order among his men, what then?"

"Dismiss him."

"And what if there were disorder within the borders of the state, what then?

The King turned to his other courtiers and changed the subject.

1B.7 Mencius appeared in audience before King Xuan of Qi and said, "We don't call a state 'traditional' because its trees are tall and old; it is because its court ministers come from families that serve from generation to generation. Your Majesty has no intimate court ministers because those you appointed in the past have already disappeared, who knows where?"

The King said, "How could I have known they lacked talent when I appointed them?"

Mencius said, "A ruler promotes men on the basis of worth only when absolutely necessary. One must be so cautious when promoting the lowly over the exalted and the unfamiliar over the familiar! Even if all your close advisors say he is worthy, that is not enough. Even if all the grandees of state say he is worthy, that is not enough. If all the people of the state say he is worthy, investigate, and if you find that he is indeed worthy, only then appoint him. On the other hand, even if all your close advisors say a minister in office is unworthy, that is not enough to dismiss him. Even if all the grandees of state say he is unworthy, that is not enough either. But if all the people of the state say he is unworthy, investigate, and if you find that he is indeed unworthy, only then dismiss him.

"Likewise, if all your close advisors say a man should be executed, that is not grounds enough to kill him. Even if all the grandees of state say he should be executed, that is not enough either. But if all the people of the state say he should be executed, investigate, and if you find that he is indeed worthy of execution, only then kill him. This is why records of the past sometimes say, 'The people of the state killed him.'

"Only in this way can you become father and mother to the people."

1B.8 King Xuan of Qi asked, "Is it so that Tang banished Jie and that King Wu killed Zhòu?"

Mencius replied, "It is so recorded in the histories."

"Is it permissible, then, for a subject to kill his ruling lord?"

Mencius said, "A man who plunders humanity is called a thief; a man who plunders righteousness is called an outcast. I have heard of the execution of Outcast Zhòu; I have not heard of the execution of a ruling lord Zhòu."

Jie was the wicked last ruler of the Xia Dynasty; Zhòu was the wicked last ruler of the Shang Dynasty.

1B.9 Mencius appeared before King Xuan of Qi and said, "When building a great room your Majesty surely instructs the Master Builder to seek out huge spans of timber. If the Master Builder obtains these huge spans, Your Majesty is pleased and sees that he is equal to his task. If a woodworker then carved the timber until it was small, Your Majesty would be angry and judge him incompetent.

"People study when they are young, and when they come of age they wish to put into practice what they have learned. What are they to do if Your Majesty tells them, 'Set aside what you have learned and follow me?'

"If you possessed a block of jade worth ten thousand measures, you would insist that it be carved by a jade carver. But when it comes to ruling a state, Your Majesty says, 'Set aside what you have learned and follow me.' How is this different from teaching the jade carver how to carve your jade?"

1B.10 The armies of Qi attacked the state of Yan and prevailed. King Xuan asked, "Some tell me to annex Yan, others say not to. For one state of ten thousand chariots to attack another and prevail within fifty days is something beyond the reach of human power. If I do not annex Yan, surely there will be some disaster sent by Tian. What is your view of annexation?"

"If the people of Yan will be pleased by your annexation, then do it. King Wu is an example of an ancient ruler who followed this course. If the people of Yan will not be pleased by your annexation, then don't do it. King Wen is an example of an ancient ruler who followed this course. When one state of ten thousand chariots attacks another and its armies are met by people bringing baskets of food and jugs of drink, how could it not be that the people are turning toward that state as men flee from flood or fire? But if the flood turns out to be deeper and the fire hotter, they will surely turn back round."

1B.11 Having attacked Yan, the state of Qi annexed it. The rulers of the other states plotted ways to come to the rescue of Yan. King Xuan said, "Most of the lords of the states are plotting to attack me. What should I be doing to respond to this?"

Mencius replied, "I have heard of one who ruled over a state merely seventy *li* square rising to rule the world; Tang was such a man. I have never heard of one who ruled over a state a thousand *li* square fearing others. The *Documents* says: 'Tang's campaign of unity began against Ge.' The world then came to have faith in him: when he turned eastwards to campaign, the Yi tribes of the west complained; when he turned south to campaign, the Di

1B.10 The 314 invasion by Qi of its neighbor to the north, Yan, was a major event for Mencius, as other passages show. Passages 2B.8-14 all concern the invasion and its aftermath for Mencius. As 1B.11 tells us, Qi did annex Yan. It installed a puppet ruler, greatly increasing the strength of Qi for a time. However, the puppet ultimately cut his strings, revived Yan's armies, and, in 285, invaded Qi as part of a coalition, an attack from which Qi never fully recovered. Although Mencius was by then surely dead, those who compiled the *Mencius* would have been aware of the lasting effect of Qi's original invasion.

The Yi and Di tribes were non-Chinese peoples living at the edges of the empire. See the **Glossary** for more.

tribes of the north complained, all saying, 'Why has he put us last?' The people looked towards him as men look towards storm clouds and rainbows during a drought. Those who went to market continued to go to market, and those who tilled the land continued to till, for he executed their rulers and comforted the people like the fall of timely rain. The people were so greatly pleased! The *Documents* says: 'We await our lord; when he comes, we shall spring back to life.'

"Now Yan was a state that treated its people with cruelty, and when Your Majesty sent your troops to campaign against it, the people of Yan met them like rescuers in times of flood or fire, bringing baskets of food and jugs of drink. How then could you have thought it proper to kill their elders, bind their youths in fetters, destroy their ancestral temples and carry off from them their precious vessels. The world was already in awe of the strength of Qi, and now your territories are doubled, yet you still fail to carry out humane governance. It is this that has mobilized the armies of the world. If Your Majesty will swiftly issue orders to release all captives old and young, leave all valuables where they were, and make plans with the people of Yan to set up a new ruler and withdraw your armies, there is time yet to stop the coming war."



1B.12 The states of Zou and Lu were in a state of war. Duke Mu of Zou said, "Thirty-three of my officers have been killed and no commoners have died to save them. If I proceed to punish those who have failed to come to their aid, there will be too many to execute, but if I do not execute them, soldiers will turn a blind eye to superiors in mortal danger and will not come to their rescue. How should I deal with this?"

Mencius replied, "In years of famine, the old and weak among your people topple into ditches to die, and thousands of able bodied men scatter to the four quarters, yet your storage granaries remain full and your treasuries stuffed. Your officers make no report of this to you, arrogantly injuring those below them. Zengzi used to say, 'Take heed, take heed! What you do will come back to you.' The people are now finally paying back their superiors, and you must not blame them, my Lord. If you put into practice humane governance the people will cleave to their superiors and die for their leaders."

1B.12 Zou and Lu were neighboring states in Shandong, frequently at war.



Zengzi (Zeng Shen) was a major disciple of Confucius, much celebrated in Lu, and often cited by Mencius.

1B.13 Duke Wen of Teng asked, "Teng is a small state, wedged between Qi and Chu. Should I serve Qi or should I serve Chu?"

Mencius replied, "These are matters of strategy, which is not within my scope. But if I were forced, I would say this one thing: dredge your moats deep and build up your walls, that

1B.13 Teng was a minor state in Shandong, just southeast of Zou. Mencius seems to have formed a close, personal tie to its young prince (see 3A.1).

together with your people you can defend your state. If you defend to the death and the people do not quit you, you shall prevail."

1B.14 Duke Wen of Teng asked, "The state of Qi is planning to reinforce Xue and I am filled with apprehension. What should I do?"

Mencius replied, "When King Tai dwelt in Bin and the Di tribes invaded his territory, he abandoned Bin and went to dwell beneath the slopes of Mt. Qi. It was not a path he chose willingly; he had no other choice. If a ruler does right, in later ages his descendants will surely rule as kings. The *junzi* opens new paths and leaves behind new precedents that can later be extended. As for whether he succeeds, that is a matter for Tian. How should you manage this, My Lord? Simply strive to do good."

1B.14 Xue was just southeast of Teng.

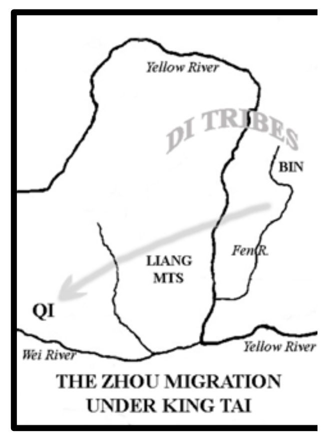
1B.15 Duke Wen of Teng asked, "Teng is a small state. I have done all I can to serve my larger neighbors, but it seems there is no way for me to evade them. What should I do?"

Mencius replied, "In the past, King Tai dwelt in Bin. The Di people encroached upon his lands. Though King Tai presented them with skins and silks, he could not evade them; though he presented them with horses and hounds, he could not evade them; though he presented them with pearls and jade, he could not evade them. Thereupon, he gathered his elders together and announced, 'What the Di people want is my land. I have heard it said that a *junzi* does not, on account of the thing he relies on to nurture his people, bring harm to them. What concern need you have that you be without a ruler? I shall quit this place.' So he left Bin and crossed the Liang Mountains, building a settlement beneath Mt. Qí, where he dwelt. The people of Bin said, 'This is a man of humanity – we must not lose him!' And they followed after him like people flocking to market.

"But others say that one's land is a trust to be passed through the generations, and this is not one ruler's prerogative to decide. One must defend it to the death.

"My Lord, you must choose between these two courses."

1B.15 The migration of the Zhou people under King Tai is mapped below.



THE ZHOU MIGRATION UNDER KING TAI

1B.16 Duke Ping of Lu was about to leave his palace when one of his favorites, a man named Zang Cang, asked, "On other days when Your Highness has gone out, you have always told the court officers where you are going. Now your carriages are already yoked and ready to depart, but the officers do not know where you will be. May I inquire?"

The Duke said, "I am going to visit Mencius."

"What's this?" said Zang Cang. "Your Highness plans to debase himself by initiating acquaintance with a common fellow?

You think him a worthy? The worthy are those from whom ritual and right flow, yet Mencius is a man who permitted the funeral of his mother to be more lavish than that he had earlier held for his father! I beg you not to go see him."

"Very well," said the Duke.

Yuezhengzi appeared before the Duke. "Why did Your Highness fail to visit Meng Ke?"

"Someone told me that Mencius permitted the funeral of his mother to be more lavish than that he had earlier held for his father. That is why I did not go."

"What's this?" said Yuezhengzi. "What Your Highness refers to as being more lavish, was simply a matter of Mencius earlier having been a common gentleman and later being a court grandee, was it not? The former case entails three burial tripods and the latter five."

"No, I was referring to the beauty of the inner and outer coffins and of the grave clothes."

"This was not a matter of lavishness. He was simply wealthier at the later time."

Yuezhengzi went to see Mencius. "I told the Duke about you and he was planning to come see you. But one of his favorites, a certain Zang Cang, obstructed him, and that is why he never came."

Mencius said, "When things go forward it is because something causes them to do so; when they are halted it is because something drags them back. It is beyond a man's power to make things go forward or stop. The fact that I did not encounter the ruler of Lu was the work of Tian. How could the son of some clansman of the Zangs prevent this encounter?"

b b b

The basis of this charge of ritual error is explained in 2B.7.

Yuezhengzi (Yuezheng Ke) was a Lu court officer close to Mencius. He refers to Mencius by his personal name, Meng Ke. At every other point of the *Mencius*, Mencius is referred to with the honorific '-zi' following his surname: Mengzi, or "Master Meng" (Latinized as "Mencius").

BOOK 2
GONGSUN CHOU
INTRODUCTION

The second book of the Mencius begins with long and detailed conversations between Mencius and a man named Gongsun Chou. Gongsun Chou is clearly identified as a native of the state of Qi, and when the book is viewed overall, it appears likely that the greater portion of it may have been assembled by Gongsun Chou himself, recording his knowledge of Mencius's speech and conduct while in Qi. Many of the characters we encounter as actors in Book 2 were presumably men of Qi or Mencius's followers there, and their identities are unknown outside the confines of the Mencius.

Qi was located in the northern region Shandong Peninsula, and Mencius's home state, Zou, was not far to the south. Judging by the contents of the book, Mencius seems likely to have twice journeyed to Qi to seek a career at court. All of Book 2A appears to picture Mencius during his first stay there, prior to the reign of King Xuan, who figures so much in Book 1. But at Book 2B.2-3, we see Mencius commit an offense of courtesy against the (unspecified) king of Qi, and it seems likely that this concluded his first visit. When the narrative is next explicit about Qi, at 2B.6, Mencius has just received high appointment as an advisor to King Xuan, about 315, and the remainder of the book focuses on the war with Yan and its aftermath, leading, at the close of the book, to Mencius's retirement from Qi.

Book 2 is most famous, however, not for its discussions of Mencius's political career, but for two major passages concerning human nature and self-cultivation: 2A.2, the longest passage in the entire text, and 2A.6, where Mencius gives his most persuasive argument that humans are by nature good.

As the book begins, Gongsun Chou asks Mencius whether he sees himself as able to restore to Qi the glory of its two most famous prime ministers of the past, the seventh century figure Guan Zhong and Yanzi, who lived a century later. Mencius clarifies for him and for us that his aspirations go far beyond the type of state strength achieved by those men. He begins by speaking of how earlier Confucians, such as the son of Confucius's disciple Zengzi (Master Zeng, or Zeng Shen), regarded such accomplishments.

Book 2B has two major themes. The first is one we will encounter often: Mencius's responses to challenges that his behavior is inconsistent with ethical principle. We see this theme highlighted in passages such as 2B.2-3 and 2B.5-7. The latter part of 2B, from 2B.8 on, concerns Mencius's response to Qi's invasion of Yan (see 1B.10-11), which led to his final departure from Qi.

BOOK 2
GONGSUN CHOU
PART A

2A.1 Gongsun Chou asked, "If you, Sir, were able to command the course of Qi, would not achievements on a par with Guan Zhong and Yanzi be possible?"

Mencius said, "Really, you are such a native of Qi! All you know about are Guan Zhong and Yanzi. Someone once asked Zeng Xi, 'Master, who is the worthier, you or Zilu?' Zeng Xi answered with furrowed brow, 'My father held Zilu in awe.' His questioner said, 'Well then, what about you and Guan Zhong?' At this, Zeng Xi flushed with displeasure. 'How could you compare Guan Zhong and me? Guan Zhong gained such utter control of his lord and monopolized the reins of government for so long, yet his accomplishments were so base – why would you ever compare me to such a man?' Even Zeng Xi felt that Guan Zhong was beneath him, and now you wish to compare me to him!"

"But Guan Zhong led his lord to rule as hegemon over the states, and Yanzi made his lord illustrious. Are these men unworthy of emulation?"

Mencius said, "To make the lord of Qi rule as a True King would be as easy as turning over one's hand."

"If this is so, then I'm more confused than ever. After all, King Wen, for all his great virtue, lived to be a hundred and had not yet brought the world under his rule. King Wu and the Duke of Zhou succeeded him; only then did their rule prevail. Now you speak of ruling as a True King as though it were a simple thing. Does that mean that King Wen is unworthy of emulation too?"

Mencius said, "How could we compare this situation to King Wen's? From the time of Tang to the time of Wuding, there were six or seven kings who were sage worthies. The world had cleaved to the Yin for a long time, and what has long persisted is difficult to change. Wuding commanded the many lords at his court and presided over the world as if he were turning it in his palm.

"Zhòu, was not far removed in time from Wuding. The traditions inherited from his predecessors, their influence and good policies, were all still present. Moreover, his closest advisors, Weizi, Wei Zhong, Prince Bigan, Jizi, Jiao Ge – all were worthy men who assisted Zhòu and provided their support. It was for these reasons that it was only after many years that Zhòu lost his grip. Not a foot of territory was not his land, not a single man was not his subject – while King Wen was just rising to prominence from a territory only one hundred *li* square. This is why it was so difficult

2A.1 Guan Zhong and Yanzi were famous chief ministers of former rulers in Qi. See the **Index of Persons** for more detail.

Zeng Xi was the son of the Confucian disciple Zengzi. Zilu was a disciple much senior to Zengzi.

Wuding was a Shang (Yin) king (r.c. 1250-1189), ruling over three centuries after Tang.

Zhòu (r. 1086-1045) was the wicked last ruler of the Shang.

Weizi and the others were all wise ministers to the tyrant Zhòu.

for him. The people of Qi have a saying:

> Though you may be clever and wise,
> The fortunes of circumstance are better to ride.
> Though you may farm with the blade of a hoe,
> The time of the season is what you must know.

It is the nature of the present time that makes True Kingship easy to attain.

"Even at the height of their powers, the Xia, Yin, and Zhou kings never held a territory of more than a thousand *li* under their direct control, and Qi is certainly as big as this. The crowing of farmyard cocks and the barking of family dogs can be heard everywhere within the state from border to border. Qi certainly has the necessary population. Without expanding its borders or adding new manpower, if state governance were to accord with policies of humanity, no one could stop Qi's lord from ruling all as a True King.

"Moreover, never has the world waited longer for a True King to arise, and never have the people suffered under tyranny more cruel than they do now. It is easy to provide food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty. Confucius said, 'The influence of virtue spreads faster than an order sent through the stations of the post.' In a time like the present, if a state of ten thousand chariots were to practice humane governance, the people would rejoice as though they had been released from the torture of being hung by their heels. With half the effort of the ancients, twice the achievements can be accomplished now. It is the times which make it so."

2A.2 Gongsun Chou asked, "If you, Sir, were to receive a high post among the grandees of Qi and were able to implement the Dao, it would not be startling if the ruler were to rise to the position of hegemon or even a true King. If this were to occur, would your heart be moved by this?"

"No," replied Mencius. "By the age of forty I had cultivated a heart that could not be moved."

"If that is so, then you, Sir, have exceeded the valor of Meng Ben by far!"

"That is not difficult," said Mencius. "Actually, Gaozi attained an unmoving heart earlier than I."

"Is there a *dao* for achieving an unmoving heart?" asked Gongsun Chou.

"Yes," replied Mencius, "there is."

"The formula by which Bogong You nurtured his valor was this: 'I shall not allow my skin to recoil in the least or let my stare flinch. I shall consider the slightest touch of another to be as

2A.2 On the term "heart," see the **Glossary**.

Meng Ben was a warrior of legendary strength.

Gaozi was a philosopher senior to Mencius. He figures prominently in Book 6A.

Mencius refers to two warriors here, Bogong You and Mengshi She. Nothing further is known of them.

insulting as if he were whipping me publicly in a market or court. What I would not accept from a coarsely clad commoner, I will not accept from the ruler of a state of ten thousand chariots. I shall look upon stabbing a great ruler as though I were stabbing a coarsely clad commoner. I shall have no fear of patrician lords. Any insulting sound that reaches my ear I must return.'

"The formula by which the warrior Mengshi She nurtured his valor was this: 'I shall regard defeat as the same as victory. To advance only after having measured the enemy or meet the enemy only after having plotted for victory shows fear of the enemy armies. How could I guarantee victory? All I can be assured of is that I will be fearless.'

"Mengshi She resembles Zengzi; Bogong You resembles Zixia. I do not know which type of valor is the finer, but Mengshi She was a man who preserved self-control.

"Once, Zengzi addressed Zixiang thus: 'Do you delight in valor? I once heard from the Master about Great Valor. "If I search inwardly and find that I am not fully upright, though I face a mere coarsely clad commoner, I shall not threaten him. If I search inwardly and find that I am fully upright, though I face ten million men I will attack."' The manner in which Mengshi She preserved his *qi* is not as fine as the way Zengzi preserved his self-control."

Gongsun Chou said, "May I inquire about the formulas that you and Gaozi used to attain an unmoving heart?"

Mencius replied, "Gaozi's rule was, 'If you cannot find sanction for a course of action in the teachings, do not search for it in your heart. If you cannot find sanction for a course of action in your heart, do not search for it in your *qi*.' I agree to the formula, 'If you do not find it in the heart, do not search for it in the *qi*.' But it is unacceptable to say, 'If you do not find it in the teachings, do not search for it in your heart.'

"The will is the leader of the *qi*, and *qi* is something that fills the body. Wherever the will leads the *qi* follows. Thus there is a saying, 'Grasp your will and do not dissipate your *qi*.'"

Gongsun Chou said, "On the one hand you have said, 'Wherever the will leads the *qi* will follow.' But you have also said, 'Grasp your will and do not dissipate your *qi*.' Is there not an inconsistency?"

Mencius answered, "When the will is unified it moves the *qi*. But when the *qi* is unified, it can move the will. For example, when you see a man stumble or rush about, this is the action of his *qi*. In such cases, it has turned back upon the heart and moved it."

Gongsun Chou said, "May I presume to inquire how you, Sir, excel?"

"I can interpret what speech means," replied Mencius, "and I nurture well my flood-like *qi*."

Zixia was a disciple of Confucius, somewhat senior to Zengzi.

Zixiang was probably a disciple of Zengzi.

Qi is an important concern in Chinese thought, although in the *Mencius* it plays a significant role in this passage alone. The term denotes a pervasive physical, bodily force or energy. See the **Glossary** for detail.

On the "will," see the **Glossary**. Here, the will serves as a link between the mind and action, while the initiation and strength of action is connected to the *qi*.

Gongsun Chou asked, "What do you mean by 'flood-like *qi*?'"

"It is hard to describe," said Mencius. "This is a *qi* that is as vast and firm as can be. If one nurtures it by means of straightforward action and never impairs it, then it will fill all between heaven and earth. It is a *qi* that is a companion to righteousness and the Dao. Without these, it will starve away. It is generated through the long accumulation of acts of right. It is not something that can be seized through a single righteous act. If in your actions there is any sense of inadequacy in your heart, it will starve away.

"This is why I say that Gaozi never really understood righteousness. He looked for it in external standards other than the heart. But your task must always be before you and you must not go making small adjustments. The task of nurturing this *qi* must never be forgotten by the heart, but you must not meddle and try to help it grow. Don't be like the simpleton from the state of Song.

"There was a man of Song who was concerned that the sprouts in his field were not growing well, so he went and tugged at each one. He went home utterly exhausted and said, 'Oh, I've made myself ill today! I've been out helping the sprouts to grow.' His sons rushed out to look and found the stalks all shriveled up. There are few in the world who do not 'help their sprouts grow.' There are those who do not 'weed' – they have simply given the whole task up as useless. But the ones who tug on the sprouts to help them grow, they are worse than useless, for they do harm!"

Gongsun Chou asked, "What do you mean when you say you can interpret what speech means?"

"When I hear biased speech, I can tell what has obscured the man's understanding. When I hear excessive speech, I can tell what trap the man has fallen into. When I hear deviant speech, I can tell where the man has strayed. When I hear evasive speech, I can tell at what point the man has exhausted his reasons. When these defects are born in the mind they bring harm to self-governance, and when proclaimed as policies of state, they bring harm to its affairs. If a sage were to arise again, he would surely affirm what I say"

"Zai Wo and Zigong excelled in the persuasive arts of speech, while Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan excelled in expressing virtue in words. While Confucius excelled in both, he said, 'I have no ability when it comes to the arts of speech.' Thus, have you, Sir, already reached the level of a sage?"

Mencius said, "What sort of thing is that to say! Once, Zigong asked Confucius, 'Are you a sage?' and Confucius replied, 'Sage? My abilities are not at that level. I'm just one who never tires of study or wearies of teaching.' Zigong said, 'To study

The description of self-cultivation here engages physical, intentional, and moral dimensions.

"The man from Song" was a proverbial way of referring to a simpleton or bumpkin.

The term "sage" denotes an ideal of the highest order, combining wisdom, virtue, and their demonstration in action. See the **Glossary** for detail.

Zai Wo, Zigong, Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan were all disciples of Confucius.

without tiring is wisdom; to teach without wearying is humanity. Both humane and wise, you, Master, are indeed a sage.' Confucius was unwilling to accept the title of sage – what sort of thing is that to say of me?"

Gongsun Chou said, "I have heard it said of Confucius's disciples Zixia, Ziyou, and Zizhang that each was like the Master in one respect, while Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan each resembled the Master in full, but at a lesser level. May I ask which of these fits you?"

"Let us put that aside for now."

"What would you say of the ancient men Bo Yi and Yi Yin?"

Mencius said, "They followed different *dao*s. For Bo Yi, one should serve no man other than one's ruler and rule over no people but those one has a right to rule; when order prevails in the world one should come forward; when chaos prevails withdraw. For Yi Yin, one may serve any ruler or rule any people; when order prevails in the world one should come forward; when chaos prevails, come forward as well. For Confucius, though, one should serve when one should serve and stop when one should stop, dally in a state when one should dally and depart quickly when one should depart quickly, all as circumstances require. These were all sages of old, and I have not yet been able to practice any of their *dao*s. My wish, however, would be to emulate Confucius."

"Were Bo Yi and Yi Yin in this way the equals of Confucius?"

"No. Since the birth of humankind, there has never been another like Confucius."

"But did they share aspects in common with him?"

Mencius said, "Yes. Had any one of them ruled over a territory one hundred *li* square, the lords of the states would have served him at his court, and he would have possessed all the world. Had any one of them been offered the chance to gain the world merely by doing one unrighteous deed or killing one innocent person, he would not have done so. In this, they are alike."

"May I ask in what respect they were different?"

"Confucius's disciples Zai Wo, Zigong, and You Ruo all had intelligence enough to recognize a sage, and none would have been so base as to show a bias towards a man they loved. Zai Wo said, 'In my view, the Master far surpasses Yao and Shun.' Zigong said, 'The Master sees the rituals of a state and from them knows the nature of its governance; he hears its music and from it knows its virtue; he looks back on a hundred generations of kings and appraises all of them such that no one can contradict him. Since the birth of humankind, there has never been another like the Master.' You Ruo said, 'It is not thus only with people. The unicorn is a

Ziyou and Zizhang were also Confucius's disciples.

Bo Yi and Yi Yin are frequently cited as examples of sages by Mencius; in 5B.1 he indicates the limits of his praise of them in more detail, and 2A.9, he is actively critical of them. Yi Yin was chief minister to Tang, the Shang founder, and Bo Yi was a worthy hermit who withdrew from society rather than serve imperfect rulers at the time of the Shang-Zhou transition.

When capitalized, "Dao" signifies a teaching about ethics or the cosmos that is considered the highest truth. When the term appears in lower case italics (*dao*) it signifies a teaching or formula that the *Mencius* refers to without necessarily endorsing as the ultimate path to wisdom.

Yao and Shun, the first two kings in Confucian versions of history, were celebrated as perfect sages. They are frequently discussed in the *Mencius*. See the **Introduction: Mencius's World of History**.

beast like other beasts, the phoenix a bird like other birds, Mount Tai a hill like any mound, the Yellow River and the sea are bodies of water like the stream in a ditch, but all these stand out from their kind, far above the crowd. Since the birth of humankind, there has been no one as outstanding as Confucius.'"

2A.3 Mencius said, "One who relies on force but borrows humanity as a means will rule as a hegemon. A hegemon must possess a large state. But he who relies on virtue to put humanity into practice will rule as a True King, and a True King is not reliant upon his state being large. Tang's state was a mere seventy *li* square and King Wen's but one hundred.

"When one relies on force to make others submit, submission does not come from their hearts; it is merely that their strength was not sufficient. When one relies on virtue to make others submit they feel pleased in the heart's core to do so, and their submission is sincere, as the seventy disciples submitted to Confucius. It is this the *Poetry* means when it says:

> From the West, from the East,
> From the South, from the North,
> None thought not to submit."

2A.4 Mencius said, "Those who are humane achieve glory; those who are inhumane suffer disgrace. To detest disgrace but to dwell in inhumanity is like hating the damp and dwelling in bottomland. If you detest disgrace it is best to exalt virtue and honor gentlemen. When worthy men have high position and able men are in office, and the ruler seizes times of peace to make clear his policies of state and the penalties of his laws, even great states will certainly be in awe. This is what the *Poetry* means when it says:

> Before the heavens were darkened with rain,
> I peeled strips of bark from the mulberry tree,
> And bound up the window, and bound up the door.
> And now, among the people below,
> Who dares to treat me with scorn?

Confucius said, 'Did not the man who composed this poem understand the Dao! A ruler able to order his state – who dares to treat him with scorn?'

"But now, if a ruler seizes times of peace as occasions for indulgent pleasures and lazy arrogance, then he is simply seeking misfortune. It is always the case that fortune and misfortune are the products of our own actions. This is what the *Poetry* means when it says:

> Ever be worthy of Tian's Mandate
> And seek out your own many blessings.

And it is what the "Taijia" means when it says, 'Heaven-sent disaster one may hope to evade; when one brings disaster upon oneself one will surely die.'"

2A.5 Mencius said, "If a ruler honors the worthy and employs the able, placing outstanding men in office, then the gentlemen of the world will all appreciate him and wish to find a place at his court. If, in his markets, where there are taxes on stall inventories there is no tax on goods sold, and where there is a tax upon the land that stalls occupy stall inventory is not taxed, then the merchants of the world will appreciate him and wish to store their goods at his markets. If his border customs officers examine travelers but do not tax them, then the wayfarers of the world will appreciate him and wish to journey on his roads. If he taxes ploughmen with corvée work on his lands and does not tax their crops, then the farmers of the world will appreciate him and seek to plough the untilled lands in his realm. If he eliminates the corvée levy on those who do not work and the tax on cultivated mulberry trees, then the people of the world will appreciate him and wish to become his subjects.

"If a ruler were indeed able to put these five measures into practice, then the people in neighboring states would look up to him as their father and mother, and since the birth of humankind, none has ever been able to induce children to attack their fathers and mothers.

"In this way, such a ruler will be without any enemy in the world. Such a man is the agent of Tian, and never has there been such a one who did not rule as a True King."

2A.6 Mencius said: "All people possess within them a moral sense that cannot bear the suffering of others. The former kings had such a moral sense and thus they devised means of government that would not allow people to suffer. If a ruler were to employ the moral sense that makes human suffering unendurable in order to implement such humane government, he would find bringing the entire world into order to be simple, as though he were turning the world in his hand.

"Why do I say that all people possess within them a moral sense that cannot bear the suffering of others? Well, imagine now a person who, all of a sudden, sees a small child on the verge of falling down into a well. Any such person would experience a sudden sense of fright and dismay. This feeling would not be something he summoned up in order to establish good relations with the child's parents. He would not purposefully feel this way in order to win the praise of their friends and neighbors. Nor would he feel this way because the screams of the child would be unpleasant.

2B.4 The "Taijia" was a chapter in the *Book of Documents*; the original text is now lost.

2B.5 The term "corvée" denotes a tax exacted in the form of compulsory labor.

2A.6 This thought experiment is critical in the *Mencius*, and for it to be understood, emphasis must be placed on the suddenness of the encounter, and the fact that Mencius is making a claim about the way all people would react, not about what action they would take.

"By imagining this situation we can see that one who lacked a sense of dismayed commiseration in such a case simply could not be a person. Moreover, anyone who lacks the sense of shame cannot be a person; anyone who lacks a sense of deference cannot not be a person; anyone who lacks a sense of right and wrong cannot not be a person.

"The sense of commiseration is the seed of humanity, the sense of shame is the seed of righteousness, the sense of deference is the seed of ritual, and the sense of right and wrong is the seed of wisdom. Everyone possesses these four moral senses just as they possess their four limbs. To possess such seeds and yet claim to be unable to call them forth is to rob oneself; and for a person to claim that his ruler is incapable of such moral feelings is to rob his ruler.

"As we possess these four senses within us, if only we realize that we need to extend and fulfill them, then the force of these senses will burst through us like a wildfire first catching or a spring first bursting forth through the ground. If a person can bring these impulses to fulfillment, they will be adequate to bring all the four quarters under his protection. But if a person fails to develop these senses, he will fail even to serve his own parents."

The idea that certain moral senses are essential to personhood is also explicit in 6A.6, which serves as a companion passage to this one.

2A.7 Mencius said, "How could it be that arrow makers are less humane than men who make shields? It is merely that those who make arrows are concerned that their arrows will not wound men, while shield makers are concerned that their shields will not protect men from wounds. It is the same comparing shaman healers and coffin makers. So one must take care in choosing an art.

"Confucius said, 'To settle in humanity is the fairest course. If one chooses not to dwell amidst humanity, whence will come knowledge?' Humanity is the exalted office of Tian and the safe haven of humankind. When nothing stands in the way, to fail to be humane is to lack wisdom. To be without humanity, without wisdom, without ritual, and without right is to be a slave. To be a slave and feel shame at being a slave is to be like the bow or arrow maker ashamed of his art. If you feel ashamed, simply act with humanity.

2A.7 Quoting *Analects* 4.1.

"To act with humanity is like archery. The archer only shoots his arrow after setting himself aright. If his shot misses the mark, he doesn't blame the man who prevailed: he simply turns to seek the cause within himself."

2A.8 Mencius said, "When anyone pointed out to Zilu an error that he had made, he was pleased. When Yu heard good speech he bowed. The great Shun surpassed even this. He prized the goodness of others as he prized his own, and would cast off all

self-regard to follow others, delighting to emulate them in doing good. In rising from being a farmer, making pots and fishing, to becoming emperor, he drew everything from others. One who draws from others in this way joins people together in doing good, and there is nothing the *junzi* prizes more than joining with people to do good together."

2A.9 Mencius said, "For Bo Yi, if a ruler were not fit to rule in his eyes he would not serve him, and if a person were not fit to be his friend he would not befriend him. He would not consent to stand in the court of a bad ruler and he would not speak with a bad man. He regarded such actions as equivalent to wearing a court robe and hat while sitting in mud or ashes. He extended the sense of hating the bad so far that, were he standing by a fellow villager whose hat he judged awry, he would move far away, as if fearing defilement. Consequently, though lords sent him invitations in honeyed words, he would not receive them and refused to go serve them.

"Liuxia Hui considered it no shame to serve a corrupt ruler, no debasement to accept a lowly office. He never hid his abilities when in service, but always accorded with the Dao. When passed over he felt no resentment, nor did he feel distress when in straitened circumstances. He said, 'You are you and I am I. Though you stripped and stood naked by my side, how could you defile me?' In this way, with carefree heart he kept company with other men and never damaged his integrity. When pressed to remain in a post, he would do so simply because he felt no pressing need to go."

Mencius said, "Bo Yi was narrow-minded; Liuxia Hui was indecorous. A *junzi* will not emulate them."

b b b

2A.9 Liuxia Hui is a semi-legendary figure. Originally a native grandee of Lu in the seventh century, rich legends of his worthiness and selflessness were elaborated by early Confucians.

BOOK 2
GONGSUN CHOU
PART B

2B.1 Mencius said, "The timing of seasonable heaven is not as critical as the lay of the land, and the lay of the land is not as critical as accord among the people. An army may encircle a city with an inner wall encompassing a mere three *li* square and an outer wall encompassing only seven, yet be unable to conquer it. Surely there will be points of such a siege where heaven's weather is fair; the failure in such cases is because the weather is not as critical as the lay of the land. Other times, though the walls may be high and the moats deep, the weapons and armor sharp and strong, and the provisions of grain plentiful, the defenders nevertheless abandon the city. This is because the lay of the land is not as critical as accord among the people.

"This is why it is said that retaining one's people is not a matter of setting up boundary markers; securing the state is not a matter of high mountains and steep ravines; subduing the world is not a matter of fine weapons and armor. Those who grasp the Dao receive the aid of the many; those who abandon the Dao receive the aid of the few. Those who are aided by few will reach the point where even their families revolt against them. Those who receive the aid of the many will reach the point where the world submits to them. When a *junzi* to whom the world submits is pitted against one whose very family has revolted against him, then the *junzi* need not even go to war, for if he does his victory is inevitable."

2B.2 Mencius was about to go to the King's court when an envoy arrived to convey this message from the King: "I was planning to pay you a visit, but I am suffering from a chill and cannot risk being out in the air. However, I will hold court this morning, and I wonder whether I will be able to see you there?"

Mencius replied, "Unfortunately, I am ill and unable to go to court."

The following day, Mencius went to pay the Dongguo family a condolence call. Gongsun Chou said, "Yesterday, you excused yourself on account of illness. Wouldn't it be ill advised to go on a visit of condolence today?"

Mencius said, "Yesterday I was ill, today I'm well. Why should I not pay the call?"

The King sent an envoy to ask after Mencius's illness, and a doctor to examine him.

Meng Zhongzi responded to their arrival by saying, "When His Majesty's command was given yesterday, my Master was ill

2B.2 According to some scholars, Mencius's career was changed by the events in this passage. They see this as the end of the first of two missions to the state of Qi, his conduct forcing him to withdraw to another state. Only later, once a new ruler, King Xuan, had come to power, did Mencius return.

Meng Zhongzi seems to have been a disciple of Mencius.

and unable to attend court. Today he has improved a bit and has hurried off to the court, but I'm not sure whether his strength will allow him to complete the journey." He then dispatched several men to intercept Mencius on the road and implore him not to return home, but to rush to court.

In the end, Mencius was forced to seek refuge for the night with the family of Jing Chou. Jing Chou said to him, "The most important relationships a man must maintain are that between father and son within the family, and that between a ruler and subject beyond it. The keystone of the former is generosity, of the latter, respect. I have seen the King show respect towards you; I have not observed you showing respect towards the King."

The Jings seem to have been a grandee family in Qi.

Mencius said, "What sort of thing is that to say! No one else in Qi speaks to the King about humanity and right. Could it be that they do not think these are worthy ideals? In their hearts they think, 'How could he be worthy of being instructed in humanity and righteousness.' What disrespect could be greater than this? I would never presume to lay before the King any teaching that was not according to the Dao of Yao and Shun – there is no one in Qi who shows the King more respect than I!"

Jing Chou said, "No, that is not what I mean. According to the rites, 'When one's father summons, one should respond without even pausing to assent. When one's ruler issues a summons, one responds without even waiting for one's horse to be harnessed.' You were preparing to go to court, but when the King's summons came, you decided not to follow through. This would seem quite unlike what the rites prescribe."

"How can you say such a thing?" said Mencius. "Zengzi said, 'The rulers of Jin and Chu have wealth unequalled, but they may have it; I'll take my humanity. They may have their exalted rank, I'll take my righteousness. In what way am I their inferior?' Would Zengzi have said such a thing if it were not correct: is it not, then, a valid *dao*?

"There are three things that the world exalts: rank, age, and virtue. At court, nothing is more important than rank, in one's village it is age that is foremost, but for nurturing an era and sustaining the people, nothing surpasses virtue. How would it be right that the King, because he possesses one of these three, treats with condescension someone who possesses the other two?

"So you see, a ruler who will truly accomplish great things will always have subjects he does not summon – if he wishes to consult with them, he will go to them. If a ruler's respect for virtue and joy in the Dao does not meet that standard, he is simply not a man with whom one may plan great things. Tang was a student to Yi Yin first and only later did he relate to him as ruler to minister; that is why he was able to become a True King effortlessly. Duke Huan of Qi was a student to Guan Zhong first and only later did he

relate to him as ruler to minister; that is why he was able to become a hegemon effortlessly. Today, the fact that in the world all the states are of equivalent size with the same poor level of virtue, so that none can prevail over any other, is simply due to rulers taking as ministers men whom they teach, rather than men from whom they learn. In the case of Tang and Yi Yin, Duke Huan and Guan Zhong, neither ruler dared to summon those ministers. Now, if Guan Zhong could not be summoned, how much less one who would not stoop to be a man like Guan Zhong?"

2B.3 Chen Zhen said, "When you were in Qi, the King presented you with a hundred weight in gold and you refused to receive it. In Song you were presented with seventy weight and in Xue fifty, and those you accepted. If your past refusal was proper, then the later acceptances were not; if the acceptances were proper the refusal was not. Sir, you must acknowledge one or the other!"

Mencius said, "I was correct in all these cases. In Song, I was about to depart on a long journey, and travelers must be presented a provisioning gift. The message sent with the gold said it was a gift of provisions – why should I have refused it? In Xue I was forced to take precautions for my safety. The message sent with the gold said that the ruler had heard of this, and was therefore sending funds so I could arm myself – why should I have refused it? But in Qi there was no reason for the gift. To give someone a gift for no reason is to treat them as goods for sale. Whenever has there been a *junzi* for sale?"

2B.4 Mencius traveled to Pinglu and spoke with its governing grandee, Kong Juxin. "If someday one of your spear carriers thrice failed to appear in the ranks, would you dismiss him?"

"I would not wait for a third time!"

"Yet you yourself have failed to take your place in the ranks many times. In years of poor harvest and famine, the old and weak among your people topple into ditches to die, while thousands of able bodied men scatter to the four quarters."

"This is not a matter I am capable of controlling."

"When a man agrees to tend another man's flocks of cattle and sheep, he must find for them pastureland and fodder. If he seeks for them but finds none, should he return the flocks to their owner or should be stand and watch them die?"

"Indeed, I am at fault."

On another occasion, Mencius appeared before the King and said, "Among those of your men who govern Your Majesty's districts I am acquainted with five. Only Kong Juxin recognizes his faults," and he recounted his conversation.

The King said, "Indeed, I am at fault."

2B.4 Pinglu was a city in the west of Qi.

2B.5 Mencius said to Chi Wa, "You resigned your post in Lingqiu in order to become Chief Judge, and it seemed appropriate then, since you would thus have opportunities to give advice to the King. But that was months ago. Could it be that no opportunity to give advice has arisen?"

Chi Wa remonstrated with the King, but the King refused his advice and Chi Wa had to resign his office and leave the court.

People in Qi began to say, "Mencius gave fine counsel to Chi Wa, but we seem to hear nothing of counsel he gives himself."

Gongduzi reported this, and Mencius said, "I have heard that a man who holds office resigns it when he cannot fulfill his charge, and an advisor gives up his role when his words are ignored. I have neither office nor advisory responsibilities, so when it comes to whether I remain or leave, I have plenty of leeway to decide what's best, don't I?"

2B.6 When Mencius served as a minister in the state of Qi, he went to Teng as part of an official entourage of condolence. The King appointed Wang Huan, the grandee who governed the district of Ge, to facilitate the mission. Wang Huan called on Mencius morning and evening, but even as they were en route back to Qi from Teng, Mencius had yet to discuss with him any matter pertaining to the mission. Gongsun Chou said, "The position of minister to Qi is not a minor one, and the road between Qi and Teng is not short. We are on our return journey; why have you not discussed with him any matter pertaining to the mission?"

Mencius said, "The fellow has already handled everything. What is there for me to discuss?"

2A.6 Mencius came to be designated as a high advisor by King Xuan in about 315.

For more depictions of Mencius's attitude towards Wang Huan (also called by his courtesy name, Zi'ao), see 4A.24-25, 4B.27.

2B.7 Mencius traveled from Qi to attend to a burial in Lu. On the road back, he stopped at Ying. Chong Yu asked him, "The other day, not realizing how unworthy I am, you requested that I supervise the coffin maker. In the press of events, I did not presume to question you, but now, if I may presume to ask, it seemed to me that the timber was rather too fine."

"In earliest times there were no rules concerning the inner and outer coffins, but in mid-antiquity the thickness of the inner coffin was set at seven inches with the outer coffin matching, and this applied to all from the Son of Heaven down to the common people. This was not a mere matter of aesthetics: only in such a way can the feelings of the heart be fulfilled. If sufficient wood could not be obtained, one could not feel satisfaction, and this was also true if one could not afford the wood. But if the wood was available and one could afford it, the ancients all followed this rule. Why would I be any different? Moreover, does it not provide

2B.7 This passage concerns the events referred to in 1B.16. Confucians, as masters of ritual, were expected to be punctilious with regard to important ceremonies, and the burial of parents was, perhaps, the most solemn of all ritual observances. The question of Mencius's conduct here would have been regarded as an extremely serious matter.

comfort to the heart to ensure that no dirt will soil the skin of the deceased. I have heard it said that the *junzi* will not skimp on the funeral of a parent for all the world."

2B.8 Shen Tong asked Mencius in private confidence, "Do you think Yan ought to be attacked?"

Mencius said, "Yes. Zikuai had no authority to give Yan away, and Zizhi had no authority to receive it from Zikuai. Let's say there was a gentleman here whom you liked; what if you, without consulting the King, privately granted to him your court rank and salary, and he accepted them without any commission from the King? What difference is there in the case of Yan?"

The armies of Qi attacked Yan, and someone said to Mencius, "Is it true that you urged Qi to attack Yan?"

"Never!" said Mencius. "Shen Tong asked whether Yan ought to be attacked and I said yes, in response to his question. Then they went off and attacked Yan! If he had asked me, 'Who should attack Yan?' I would have replied, 'He who acts as the agent of Tian should attack Yan.'

"Let's say there were a murderer here, and someone asked, 'Should this man be executed?' I would say yes. If he asked, 'Who should execute him?' I would reply, 'The Chief Judge should execute him.'

"As it is, this is simply one Yan attacking another Yan. Why would I ever urge such a thing?"

2B.8 We return here to events surrounding Qi's invasion of Yan in 314 (see 1B.10-11). Mencius is reported in a different early text to have given his approval of the invasion of Yan by Qi, and here the *Mencius* seems at pains to explain that this is not so. Note how it is specified that the courtier Shen Tong visited Mencius in an unofficial capacity.

The background events in Yan are that the ruler, Zikuai, abdicated to his minister, Zizhi, prompting Zikuai's son – the original heir to the throne – to initiate a civil war.

2B.9 The people of Yan revolted. The King said, "I feel such embarrassment towards Mencius!"

Chen Jia said, "Your Majesty need not feel disturbed. Whom would you say was wiser and more humane, Your Majesty or the Duke of Zhou?"

"Ugh! What a thing to say!"

"The Duke of Zhou dispatched Guan Shu to oversee Yin, and Guan Shu, relying on the people of Yin, rebelled against him. If he knew this would happen when he dispatched Guan Shu then sending him was not humane, and if he did not know then he was unwise. Even the Duke of Zhou could not exhaust humanity and wisdom, much less Your Majesty! I request permission to visit Mencius and explain this to him."

When Chen Jia visited Mencius he said, "What sort of man was the Duke of Zhou?"

"A sage of ancient times," said Mencius.

"The Duke of Zhou dispatched Guan Shu to oversee Yin, and Guan Shu, relying on the people of Yin, rebelled against him, is that not so?"

"Yes."

2B.9 Soon after the Zhou King Wu overthrew the Shang (Yin) king, he died. His son was a boy, and the Duke of Zhou, King Wu's younger brother, assumed the role of regent. Other brothers, led by Guan Shu, who was in the east resettling the Shang people, suspected the Duke of a coup d'état and they revolted. The revolt was only suppressed after three years. The Duke of Zhou acted as regent for seven years, and then gave up power in order to allow King Wu's son to reign

"When the Duke dispatched Guan Shu, did he know this would happen?" asked Chen Jia.

"He did not know it."

"Then do not even sages make mistakes?"

Mencius said, "The Duke of Zhou was a younger brother to Guan Shu; was his error not a natural one to make? Moreover, when the *junzi* of old committed an error, he corrected his course. When a ruler errs today, he persists in his error. The error of the *junzi* of old was like an eclipse of the sun or moon: the people all observed it, and when he changed course they all admired him for it. Nowadays rulers not only persist in their errors, they make excuses for them."

without challenge. For these and other reasons, the Duke was regarded as one of the great sages of history by Confucians.

2B.10 When Mencius resigned his position at the court of Qi, the King went to see him and said, "Having long wished for an opportunity to meet you, finally being able to serve with you at court has been a great joy to me. Now you are casting me aside to return to your home, I wonder whether I will have the opportunity to see you again."

Mencius replied, "That is something I dared not presume to ask for, but it is surely my earnest wish."

On another day, the King spoke with Shizi. "I would like to endow Mencius with a residence in the capital district, along with a stipend of ten thousand measures so that he can support disciples. He will be a model to the nobles and people of the state. Why don't you speak with him about this."

Shizi conveyed this message to Chenzi, requesting that he tell Mencius, and Chenzi did so. Mencius said, "Just so: how could one expect Shizi to understand the impossibility of this? If I were eager for wealth, how would I achieve it by resigning an office with a stipend of ten thousand in order to receive ten thousand?

"Ji Sun once said, 'How strange Zishu Yi was. When he held office, if his advice was not accepted he resigned, but had his son and brother serve as ministers. Who indeed does not wish for wealth and rank? But in the midst of wealth and rank, he chose to occupy a point of high ground outside.'

"In the old days, men came to market to exchange the goods they had for the goods they did not, and officers merely supervised. But one vulgar fellow insisted on seeking out a point of high ground so he could observe all the traders in order to corner the market. Everyone despised him, and so they taxed him. The taxation of merchants began with that vulgar fellow."

2B.10 From the mid-fourth century, the kings of Qi adopted a policy of attracting talented personnel to their state by subsidizing "worthy men," by which they meant men who were esteemed as learned or who could offer needed talent to the court. Those known for learning were provided homes near the capital city's Jixia Gate, and given stipends adequate to support a host of followers. That may be what the King is offering here.

The identities of Ji Sun and Zishu Yi are not known, and this story seems only a partial analogy to Mencius's case.

2B.11 Mencius departed from Qi and lodged overnight at Zhou. A visitor arrived wishing to detain Mencius in Qi on behalf of the King. He sat with Mencius and spoke, but Mencius made no reply,

2B.11 Zhou was a town outside the capital district of Qi. The name bears no relation to the dynastic name.

merely leaning on his arm rest and reclining. The visitor was displeased. "I prepared myself with a day's fast before daring to come speak with you, Master. Yet you lie reclining and do not listen to me. I beg your leave never to see you again!"

Mencius said, "Sit and I will speak plainly to you. In the past, had Duke Mu of Lu not always had a man in attendance by Zisi's side, he would not have secured Zisi's continued presence, while Xie Liu and Shen Xiang had to keep their men by the Duke's side or they would not have felt secure about the Duke. You think you are acting on my behalf, but you do not even treat me as Zisi was treated. Is it I who am breaking with you, or you who are breaking with me?"

Duke Mu was a fifth century ruler of Lu. He is known for patronizing famous Confucians, such as Zisi, who was Confucius's grandson. Xie Liu and Shen Xiang may also have been Confucians, but this is not clear.

2B.12 As Mencius was departing from the state of Qi, Yin Shi remarked to someone, "If he didn't realize that our King could never be a ruler like Tang or King Wu, then he is surely a very unperceptive man! If he did realize it and came to court anyway, then he's just a fortune seeker. He traveled a thousand *li* to appear before the King; now that he's met with no success he's leaving, but he's been on the road for three nights and has only just got past the town of Zhou. What's the point of this dawdling? It seems most distasteful to me."

Gāozi reported this comment, and Mencius said, "What does this Yin Shi know of me? It was my wish to travel a thousand *li* to visit the King, but how could it be my wish to have met with no success? I simply have no alternative but to leave. To me, it feels all too fast that after three nights I've already left Zhou – the King might still change his ways! If he did, he would certainly call me back. Only after I had passed Zhou and the King had sent no message pursuing me did I feel the true impulse to return home. And even so, how could I simply abandon the King? He is still capable of turning to goodness. If he would only use my counsel, it would not merely be the people of Qi to whom peace would come, it would be the entire world. And the King might still change his ways – I look for it every day! How could I behave like those petty courtiers who remonstrate with their rulers and, when their advice is not followed, stalk off frowning in anger and race all day to get as far away as possible before seeking an inn."

When Yin Shi heard of this response he said, "I am a petty man indeed!"

2B.12 Gāozi seems to be a disciple. He is a different person from the philosopher Gaozi, whom we heard of in 2A.2, and will see again in Book 6A.

2B.13 When Mencius was leaving Qi, Chong Yu accompanied him on the road and asked, "You are wearing an unhappy expression, Sir. Yet I have heard you say, 'The *junzi* does not complain against Tian, nor does he blame men.'"

Mencius said, "That was one time, this is another. Every

2B.13 Here Chong Yu cites text found in *Analects* 14.35, uttered by Confucius when his mission seems to have failed. In Mencius's

five hundred years a True King should arise, and in the interval there will always be ages famed for excellence. But since the time of the Zhou founders it has now been over seven hundred years. By the calendar calculation, it is overdue; considering what the times are like, the world is ready. But Tian does not yet wish to bring peace to the world. If it did, in this generation, who apart from me could it turn to? Why should I be unhappy?”

response, “That was one time” seems to refer to Confucius’s era. Compare this passage to 2A.1 and 7B.38.

2B.14 Mencius had left Qi and was dwelling in Xiu. Gongsun Chou asked, “Is it traditional practice to serve at court without accepting a stipend?”

“No,” said Mencius, “but when I had my first audience with the King at Chong, I determined as I retired from his presence that I would ultimately resign. Not wishing to appear to be changeable, I never accepted my stipend. Then the war began and it would not have been proper to ask leave to depart. It was never my intent to remain long in Qi.”

2B.14 Xiu was in southern Shandong, near the small states of Zou and Teng, where Mencius seems to have settled after leaving Qi. His departure was now complete.

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BOOK 3
DUKE WEN OF TENG
INTRODUCTION

Book 3 is composed of fewer distinct passages than other books, many quite lengthy. If it can be said to possess an over-arching theme, that would probably be the theme of argument. A large portion of the book is devoted to debates between Mencius and his philosophical opponents, or refutations of challenges mounted against the ethical character of Mencius's principles and actions.

The book begins in a different mode, with several passages concerning Mencius's relationship with the young ruler of the small state of Teng, located only about fifteen miles from Mencius's native state of Zou. When we left Mencius at end of Book 2B, he was residing in a town called Xiu after his departure from Qi. Xiu was only about ten miles from Teng's capital and may have fallen within state borders, so the likelihood is that Teng was Mencius's next stop after Qi.

While 3A.1-3 all concern Mencius's relations with Duke Wen of Teng, the remainder of 3A consists of a pair of long passages in which Mencius engages in disputes with men who are associated with philosophical schools other than Confucianism, one is an Agriculturist, a school that followed doctrines associated with a mythical former ruler called the Sublime Farmer; the other is a Mohist. Passage 3A.4, in particular, provides a sense of the lively traditions of master-disciple schools that developed during the Warring States era. It portrays men who are, in a sense, shopping for a master and doctrine, switching allegiance and debating the merits of various schools. This is the intellectual environment of competition and debate that shaped Mencius's philosophical persona, and towards the end of Book 3, in 3B.9, Mencius is forced to explain how this type of verbal sparring accords with the ethical Dao he is preaching.

Much of Book 3B involves Mencius defending his own conduct from charges of inconsistency, a theme we encounter in other books as well. Passages 3B.1, 4, and 7 are all of this nature. The setting for Book 3B is unclear. There is no further reference to Teng, but passages 3B.5, 6, and 8 are all set in the state of Song, a much more significant state (although small, compared to Wei and Qi, as suggested in the opening of 3B.5). Song was about one hundred miles southwest of Teng, and we know from 3A.1 that Mencius visited Song before his residence in Teng – some scholars believe more than a decade before – so Book 3 seems clearly not to constitute a chronological account of Mencius's activities, unlike the first two books of the Mencius. The final entry, 3B.10, is clearly located in Qi.

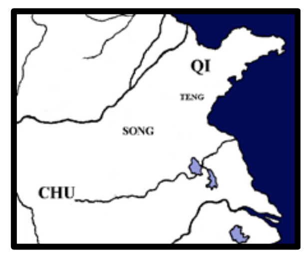
BOOK 3
DUKE WEN OF TENG
PART A

3A.1 When Duke Wen of Teng was still only the heir apparent he traveled to the state of Chu. His route took him through Song, and there he visited with Mencius, who expounded to him the doctrine that humans are by nature good, his words everywhere referring to the sage kings Yao and Shun.

When the future duke returned from Chu, he visited Mencius again. Mencius said, "Do you doubt my words, Prince? There is only one Dao and no other. Cheng Gan once said of Duke Jing of Qi, 'He is but a man, and I am a man as well. Why should I hold him in awe?' Confucius's disciple Yan Yuan said, 'What sort of man was Shun? What sort of man am I? Any man who aspires to it can be like this.' Gongming Yi said, 'My teacher is King Wen, and how could I be misled by the Duke of Zhou?'

"Now, if its territory were a square, Teng would be about fifty *li* to a side. That is big enough to be turned it into a state that exemplifies goodness. The *Documents* says, 'If the medicine doesn't make your head swim, your illness won't be cured.'"

3A.1 The state of Chu was the premier power in south China, and during Mencius's day, it was steadily enlarging its reach to the north and east, coming into ever closer proximity to the Shandong region dominated by Qi, portions of which it would seize in the following century.



3A.2 Duke Ding of Teng died. The Prince, his heir, spoke to Ran You saying, "Mencius once spoke with me in the state of Song and I will never forget what he said. Now that I have unfortunately come to this point of great sadness, I would like you to go ask advice of Mencius before I carry out the ceremony."

3A.2 Ran You was tutor to the Prince.

Ran You traveled to Zou and questioned Mencius. "How fine of him!" said Mencius. "The funeral of one's parent is indeed an occasion to exhaust one's efforts. Zengzi said, 'While they are alive, serve them according to ritual. When they are dead, bury them according to ritual; sacrifice to them according to ritual. This is worthy of being termed filiality.' I am not well versed in the rites appropriate for a lord's burial, but I have heard this much: In matters of the three-year mourning, wearing clothes made of cloth that is coarse and hemmed, and eating thin or thick gruel were common custom from the Son of Heaven down to the common people under all three dynasties."

The quote here is found in *Analects* 11.5, where it is attributed to Confucius.

Ran You returned and made his report. When it was settled that the rites of three years mourning would be followed, the ducal clansmen and officers of state were displeased. "These rites were not observed for the former rulers of our senior clan state of Lu," they said, "nor for any of the rulers of our own state. It is unacceptable for you to reverse these precedents on your own initiative. Moreover, the records tell us: 'In funerals and sacrifice,

The ruling clan of Teng shared common descent with the ruling clan of Lu, which was a senior branch of the lineage.

accord with your ancestors.'"

The Prince replied, "I have received instruction from others."

He told Ran You, "Formerly I never attended to my studies. I loved only racing horses and swordplay. My clansmen and officials all feel I am deficient and unable to devote myself fully to this great task. Please go ask further of Mencius."

Ran You returned to Zou and questioned Mencius, who said, "Just so, one may not rely on others in such matters. Confucius said, 'When the ruler dies, all take their orders from the prime minister, while the heir eats gruel, his face deeply darkened. When he takes his place and weeps, none among his many officers dares not to wail, for they follow his example. When a superior delights in a thing, those below him inevitably display deeper delight. The virtue of the *junzi* is like the wind, and the virtue of common people is like the grasses: when the wind blows over the grasses, they will surely bend.' Thus everything depends on the Prince."

This quote is found, with slight variation, in *Analects* 14.40.

The metaphor used here is found in *Analects* 12.19.

Ran You returned and made his report. The Prince said, "Indeed, all truly rests upon me." He dwelt in the thatched hut of mourning for five months and issued neither orders nor prohibitions. His officers and clansmen pronounced him wise in his conduct. When the time came for the burial rite, visitors came from the four quarters to attend in condolence. Observing the grief in his expression and his mournfulness as he wept, all were deeply pleased.

3A.3 Duke Wen of Teng asked about governance.

Mencius said, "A ruler must not be slow in handling the business of the people. The *Poetry* says:

> By day they gather up the reeds,
> By night they weave them into ropes,
> Rush up to repair the roof,
> Then off to sow the seeds of grain.

The *dao* that pertains to the common people is that those who have a constant sufficiency of goods will have a constancy of mind, while those who lack a constancy of goods lack a constancy of mind. Without any constancy of mind, they will abandon themselves to strange behavior and excesses; there will be nothing they are unwilling to do. If you punish people only after they fall into crime in this way, then you have set a trap for your people. When has there ever been a man of humanity on the throne who entrapped people in this way? Thus a worthy ruler will be reverent and thrifty, and will treat his subordinates with ritual propriety. He will only take from his people what is prescribed in the codes of the state. Yang Hu said, 'One who pursues wealth will not be

The notion that material sufficiency is a prerequisite for ethics among ordinary people was a theme of 1A.7.

Setting "traps" for the people is also a theme in 1B.2.

humane; one who pursues humanity will not be wealthy.'

"During the Xia Dynasty era, families were each allotted fifty *mu* of land, and they were taxed by the *gong* system; during the Yin Dynasty, families had seventy *mu* of land, and the tax system was called the *zhu*; Zhou Dynasty families had one hundred *mu* each, and were taxed according to the *che* system. Basically, all three systems were designed to tax at a rate of about one-tenth. The term *che* means 'what is taken'; the term *zhu* means 'what is lent.' Longzi said, 'In managing the land, no system was better than the *zhu* nor worse than the *gong*.' The *gong* system calculated a normal tax amount on the basis of an average over several years. In good years, when grain was so plentiful that people wasted it, the government could have taken more and the people would not have considered it harsh, but it took relatively little. In bad years, when food was so scarce that the people ate the husks which should have fertilized the fields, the government still insisted on its full quota. If the ruler, as father and mother of the people, exhausts the people so that they can't care for aged parents no matter how hard they work, even as they pile on debt, until young and old alike tumble into the gutters to die, in what way is he the father and mother of the people? Teng has always practiced hereditary possession of income producing lands for its noble families. The *Poetry* says:

> May it rain on the lord's common fields,
> And then reach to our private ones.

Only the *zhu* system involved designated common and private fields in this way. Looked at in this way, though, the Zhou in effect used the *zhu* too.

"You should establish schools to teach the people, calling them *xiang*, *xu*, *xue*, or *xiao*. *Xiang* means 'nurture'; *xiao* means 'teach'; *xu* were named for archery training. The Xia called schools *xiao*; the Shang called them *xu*; the Zhou called them *xiang*. All three eras used the term 'study' (*xue*). In all cases, the goal was to clarify the relationships of human society. When human relationships are clearly understood by those above, people are kind to those below them, down to the lowest levels. Should a True King arise, he will surely take this principle as his model and you will become the teacher of a True King. The *Poetry* says:

> Though the Zhou was an old state
> Its mandate is new.

Here it refers to King Wen. If you try with all your might, you can surely make your state new."

The Duke sent his minister Bi Zhan to ask about the "well-field system."

Mencius said, "Your ruler plans to implement humane

Yang Hu (elsewhere called Yang Huo) was a contemporary of Confucius who rebelled against the powerful families in the state of Lu and attempted a type of coup d'état. He is a surprising figure for Mencius to cite as an authority.

Of these four terms, only the *che* 撤 was a common form of tax.

These terms for schools are found in other early texts, though there are differences with Mencius's specific account., and the etymological glosses are somewhat problematic.

The well-field system was a key element of Mencius's conception of ideal state organization. It

governance and has selected you for this purpose. You must exert yourself! Humane governance always starts from the setting of land boundaries. If boundaries are not properly drawn, the division of land into nine-parcel "wells" will be uneven, and stipends of public field grain will be unequal. This is why despotic rulers and corrupt officers invariably disrupt field boundaries. Once the boundaries are settled, the divisions of fields and setting of stipends will be effortless.

"Now, Teng is a very small state, but it certainly must have both those who rule from court and those who live out on the land. Without rulers at court there would be no way to bring order to those on the land, and without those on the land there would be no way to sustain those who rule at court.

"I recommend that those living on the land be taxed at a rate of one ninth, in the manner of the *zhu*, while those who live within the walls of the capital should be taxed at a rate of one-tenth, and required to deliver their tax directly. From the highest ministers down, court officers should be provided fifty *mu* of land whose income will supply the costs of their ancestral sacrifices. For every additional adult male in the family line, another twenty-five *mu* of land should be assigned.

"In the burial of the dead or in moving one's home, people should not be permitted to go beyond their home villages. If those who together till a well field's land befriend one another at home and abroad, look out for one another, and support one another in illness, the people will live in close comradeship.

"A well field measures one *li* square or nine hundred *mu*. The central plot is shared as 'common' land; the eight families each cultivate one of the outer hundred *mu* plots privately, and farm the common plot together. Only when the work on the common plot is done do they dare turn to their private duties. This is the distinctive character of the people who live on the land.

"All this is a broad overview. As for filling in the details, that must be up to your ruler and you."

takes its name from the shape of the Chinese character for "well," *jing* 井, its hashtag shape suggesting nine fields, with a central one devoted to crops farmed by the men of the surrounding eight farming households as a corvée tax. See the **Glossary**. It is doubtful that the well-field system was ever more than an ideal model.

3A.4 A man named Xu Xing came to Teng from Chu, preaching the doctrines of the Sublime Farmer. He marched through the court gate and announced to Duke Wen, "I, a distant stranger, have heard that Your Highness is practicing humane governance, and I wish to receive a dwelling place here that I may become one of your common subjects."

Duke Wen provided him a place. His several dozen followers all wore clothes of coarse hemp and eked out a living by weaving sandals and mats.

A follower of Chen Liang named Chen Xiang came to Teng from Song with his brother Xin, both bearing ploughs upon their backs. Chen Xiang said, "I have heard that Your Highness is

3A.4 In this passage and the next we see Mencius engaged in sectarian debate with philosophical adversaries.

The Sublime Farmer (Shen Nong 神農) was a mythical inventor of farming, revered by a school of thinkers advocating a return to primitive agricultural society.

practicing the governance of sages. This makes you a sage as well, and it is my wish to become the common subject of a sage."

Then Chen Xiang met Xu Xing and was delighted. He discarded all he had learned before and took Xu Xing as his teacher. When he met Mencius, he spoke to him of Xu Xing's teachings. "The lord of Teng is certainly a worthy ruler. Still, he has yet to hear the Dao. A true worthy tills the soil beside his people, cooking his own meals as he orders the state. Now, Teng has granary stores and treasure vaults; this shows that the Duke treats his people with harshness in order to nurture his own person. How could this be worthy?"

Mencius said, "Does Master Xu only eat what he himself has planted?"

"Yes."

"Does he only wear clothes that he himself has sewn?"

"No," said Chen Xiang. "He wears hemp."

"Does he wear a cap?"

"Yes."

"What kind?"

"It is of plain silk."

"He weaves it himself?"

"No, he traded some grain as barter for it."

"Why doesn't Master Xu weave it himself?"

"It would interfere with his farm work."

"Does he cook with pots and steamers and work his land with an iron ploughshare?"

"Yes."

"Does he make these things himself?"

"No, he trades grain to get such things."

"Then to trade grain for implements cannot be treating the potter and smith with harshness, and when the potter and smith exchange their wares for grain, neither is that treating the farmer harshly. But why does not Master Xu work as a potter and smith so that he will be able to get from within his own home everything that he needs? Why does he enter into this welter of exchanges with various craftsmen? Doesn't he begrudge all this bother?"

"No one," said Chen Xiang, "could undertake the work of all craftsmen and be a farmer besides!"

"Well, then, is ruling the world the only occupation that one can undertake while farming? There are affairs of great men and affairs of ordinary men. If it were necessary for each individual first to make all the implements of his work before using them, it would simply march the world down the road to exhaustion.

"For this reason it is said, 'Some labor with their minds, some labor with their strength.' Those who labor with their minds

Chen Liang was a Confucian.

bring order to those who labor with their strength, and those who labor with their strength are ordered by those who labor with their minds. Those who are put in order by others feed people, and those who order people are fed by others. This is a universal principle throughout the world.

"In the time of Yao, the world was not yet settled. The great flood raged across the land, inundating the world; plants grew thick, and birds and beasts ranged and multiplied. At that time, the five grains did not yet ripen for harvest, and the birds and beasts infringed on human settlements, their tracks crossing in the midst of the central states. Yao in particular brooded over this, and he raised up Shun to help him spread order. Shun told Yi to be in charge of fire, and Yi lit fires in the mountains and marshes to burn out the birds and beasts, who fled into hiding. Yu dredged the nine river courses. He channeled the Ji and Ta Rivers into the sea; he unblocked the Rivers Ru and Han, and he guided the Huai and Si until they both drained into the Yangzi. Only then could the people of the central states gather enough food to eat. During those times, Yu spent eight years abroad in the land – three times he passed the gate of his home, but he never stepped inside. Though he wished to till the land, could he have done so?

"It was Hou Ji who taught the people the art of agriculture and how to plant the five types of grain. As the grains ripened, people could nurture their young. There is a *dao* that common people follow: if they have food enough to eat and clothes enough to wear, they sit in idleness and pursue no learning, little different from birds and beasts. Yao brooded over this as well, and he appointed Xie to be Minister of the People and teach them about proper human relationships – about affection between father and son, righteousness between ruler and minister, the proper divisions between husband and wife, the precedence of elder and younger, and the faithfulness of friends. Yao said, 'Comfort their labor, draw them to come, straighten them upright, assist them with aid, make each gain the place proper to him, and then inspire them further through acts of virtue.' The sage worries for his people like this – does he have spare time for farming?

"Yao took it upon himself to worry he would find no Shun, and Shun took it upon himself to worry he would find no ministers like Yu and Gaoyao. He who takes it upon himself to worry that his hundred *mu* of land is not well worked – that man is a farmer.

"A man who portions his wealth out among others is called generous; one who teaches others to be good is called conscientious; to find the right leader for the world is called humanity. It is easy to turn the world over to someone else – to find the right man for it is what's hard! Confucius said, 'How grand was the rule of the Emperor Yao! Only Yao could emulate

Mencius's formula of the two types of laborers was frequently cited as an article of faith in traditional China.

Mencius here recounts a version of the rise of civilization that underlies much Confucian doctrine. Elements of it are invoked throughout the *Mencius*. More detail about the cultural heroes named here appears in the **Index of Persons**.

The Ji and Ta rivers ran parallel to the lower reaches of the Yellow River. Mencius's geography is in error here: the Si drains into the Huai, which drains into the Pacific. See **Map 1**.

Note that for Confucians, Hou Ji (a forbear of the Zhou people) was the inventor of agriculture, rather than the Sublime Farmer.

Confucius's words appear in *Analects* 8.19.

the grandeur of Tian. So boundless was he that the people could find no name for him. What a ruler Shun was! Towering! He possessed all the world, but regarded none of it as his own.' Yao and Shun possessed the world – how could it be that they did not apply all their minds to it? Of course they didn't apply their minds to farming!

"I have heard the wisdom of using the culture of the central states to transform the Yi tribes; I have never heard the wisdom of transforming into the Yi. Your teacher, Chen Liang, came from Chu. He took pleasure in the Dao of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius, so he traveled north to the central states. Even among the scholars of the north, there were none who could surpass him. We call men like him heroic gentlemen. You and your brother studied under him for dozens of years, but now that he's dead, you turn your backs on him.

"When Confucius died, after they had observed the three-year mourning period, the disciples packed their bags to go to their homes. They all went to see Zigong, and facing one another, they all wailed until their voices gave out, only then did they depart. Zigong returned to the gravesite, where he built a hut and lived alone for three years more, only then departing for home. At another point, Zixia, Zizhang, and Ziyou felt that their comrade You Ruo resembled their sage master, and they wished to serve him as they had Confucius. They pressed Zengzi to join them, but Zengzi said, 'It is not right. As though washed by the Yangzi and Han Rivers, bleached by the autumn sun: so gleaming white – the Master cannot be surpassed!'

"How different from Zengzi you are! A shrike-tongued barbarian comes from the south opposing the Dao of the former kings, and you turn your back on your teacher to study with him. I've heard people speak of climbing out of a dark ravine up to the top of a tall tree, but never of descending from the treetops to be in a dark ravine. In the *Poetry*, the 'Odes of Lu' say:

> He struck at the Rong and the Di tribes north,
> Then south, to punish the Jing and the Shu.

The Duke of Zhou punished these people, now you want to learn from them – that's a change for the worse, indeed!"

Chen Xiang said, "If we follow Xu Xing's *dao*, market prices will be fixed and there will be no fraud in the state. Though you sent a mere boy to the market, no one would cheat him. When bolts of woven cloth and silk are sold in standard lengths, when raw hemp, flax, and silk are sold at standard weights, when the five grains are sold in standard measures, then prices will be unified. The same will be true for sandals, too."

Mencius said, "That all are not identical is in the nature of things. Some are half a dozen times more valuable than others,

"Central states" corresponds to both the idea and the term now corresponding to "China." During Mencius's time, states at the edge of old Zhou empire like Chu were still regarded as not quite fully civilized.

As the senior surviving disciple, Zigong took on the role of chief mourner, Confucius's son having died earlier.

some a thousand times, and some a million. If you insist that they all be treated as equal, you will bring chaos to the world. If a sandal coarsely woven costs the same as one crafted with fine weave, who will ever make fine sandals again? To follow Master Xu's *dao* is to lead one another into fraud. How could one bring order to a state in this way?"

3A.5 A Mohist named Yi Zhi wished to visit Mencius, and asked an introduction from Xu Bi. Mencius said, "I have long wished to meet him, but I am ill now. When I'm better, I'll go pay him a visit. There is no need for him to come here."

But later, Yi Zhi pressed Xu Bi for an introduction once again. Mencius said, "I can see him now. If one is not straightforward, then the Dao will not become clear. I'll straighten him out. I hear that Yi Zhi is a Mohist. Mohists make frugality in funerals part of their *dao*. Yi Zhi aspires to change the world in this way, and it must be that he believes frugal funerals to be honorable, yet he himself gave his parents lavish funerals – it would seem that he treated his parents dishonorably."

Xu Bi reported this to Yi Zhi, who said, "According to the *dao* of the Ru, the ancients prized acting towards others, 'As though cradling a babe in arms.' What would this mean? I believe it means loving all without distinction, beginning with one's parents."

Xu Bi reported this to Mencius, who said, "Does Yi Zhi truly believe that men can love their neighbors' children as much as their brothers'? His argument actually relies on that special example picturing how we'd feel if we saw some innocent baby crawling to the edge of a well. When Tian gives birth to a thing, it gives it only one set of roots. Yi Zhi's arguments seem to work because he gives them two roots.

"Most likely, in past ages men did not bury their parents, but simply consigned their bodies to an open ditch when they died. But some days later, passing by, they would have seen how the foxes had gnawed on the corpses and the flies sucked. Sweat would have stood out on their brows as they averted their eyes. Now that sweat was not conjured up for others to see – it would have been the feelings of their inmost hearts pouring forth on their faces. Then they would have returned to their homes to get shovels and baskets to cover the corpses over. If burying them thus was truly the right thing, then when filial sons and men of humanity bury their parents it is certainly in accord with the Dao."

Xu Bi reported this answer to Yi Zhi, who stared blankly for a time and then said, "I have taken his point."

b b b

3A.5 Mohists prized frugality as part of their utilitarian ethic. This led them to oppose the expense of the rituals Confucians prized.

"Ru" 儒 was the name for ritualists, and it was used to designate Confucians. Even today, the term for "Confucian" in Chinese is Ru.

The suggestion here may be that Mencius's child-in-the-well argument in 2A.2 was appropriated by Mohists and repurposed to attack Confucians.

BOOK 3
DUKE WEN OF TENG
PART B

3B.1 Chen Dai said, "Refusing to pay court to ruling lords is rather narrow minded. If you were willing to appear before them, in the best case they may come to rule as True Kings, and even if not, they may rule as hegemons. As the old records say, 'A foot long when bent is a yard long when stretched.' It seems a good thing to do."

Mencius said, "Once Duke Jing of Qi was hunting and summoned his gamekeeper by waving his pennant. The gamekeeper would not come, and so the Duke was going to have him executed. 'A resolute gentleman never forgets himself, though he may be cast in a ditch; a valorous gentleman never forgets himself, though his head be at stake.' Why did Confucius apply this saying to the gamekeeper? It was because the gamekeeper was summoned by a call that was inappropriate to his office. What should be said about a person who goes without awaiting the proper call? Moreover, that saying about feet and yards concerns profit, and if one aims at profit one is as willing to bend a yard into a foot.

"Once Zhao Jianzi ordered Wang Liang to be charioteer for his protégé Xi, but in a whole day's hunt Xi failed to catch a single bird. Xi reported back saying, 'He's the most worthless man in the world at his task!' Someone told Wang Liang, who replied, 'Let him try me again.' After being prevailed upon, Xi agreed. In one morning he caught ten birds, and he reported, 'He is the best man in the world at his task!' Zhao Jianzi said, 'I will put him in charge of driving you permanently,' but when he spoke to Wang Liang, Wang Liang declined. 'I drove by the rules,' he said, 'and he caught not one thing all day, but when I bent the rules he caught ten in a morning. The *Poetry* says:

> Never straying as he rode,
> Each arrow pierced the mark.

It is not my custom to drive for petty men. I beg to decline.' Even a charioteer was ashamed to drive such an archer to hunt, although the game might be piled as high as a hill. And what should we make of someone who bends the Dao to accommodate others?

"Besides, you are wrong, Sir. One who bends himself cannot straighten others."

3B.1 As the argument in Book 3B makes clear, Mencius's insistence that rulers show him high signs of respect came in for much criticism. We saw an example of how this issue affected Mencius's career in 2B.2.

The tale of the gamekeeper is retold with more interpretive detail in 5B.7.

Wang Liang was famous for his skill as a charioteer.

3B.2 Jing Chun said, "How could anyone deny that Gongsun Yan and Zhang Yi were truly great men? A moment's anger would set their lords in fear; if they dwelt content, the world rested easy."

Mencius said, "In what respect were these great men? Have you never studied the rites? When a young man is capped, he receives a charge from his father,[2] but when a girl is married, it is her mother who gives her the charge. As her daughter is escorted out the gate she admonishes her: 'When you reach your new home, be respectful! Be modest! Never disobey your husband!' To treat compliance as the rule is the *dao* of a wife or concubine.

"But when a man dwells in the broad mansion of the world, takes his stand in the upright office of the world, and walks the great Dao of the world, then when he has a path to reach his goals, he takes it together with the people, and when he cannot reach his goals he walks the Dao alone. Wealth and noble rank cannot corrupt him; poverty and humble rank cannot sway him; threats of force cannot bend him. Such a one is what we call a 'great man.'"

3B.2 Gongsun Yan and Zhang Yi were famous as court strategists, who pursued ruthlessly amoral policies of diplomacy and war in order to expand the power and territories of rulers who hired them.

Mencius refers to the "capping" ceremony, which was a rite of passage ceremony for elite adolescent boys.

3B.3 Zhou Xiao asked, "Did the *junzi* of old serve at court?"

"They did," replied Mencius. "Tradition tells us: 'If for three months Confucius lacked a ruler to serve, he grew anxious. When he departed the border of a state, he always carried a ritual gift to offer when appearing at a new court.' Gongming Yi said, 'If a man of old went three months without a ruler to serve, people paid condolence calls.'"

"Offering condolences after three months without a ruler to serve, is that not rushing things?"

"For a gentleman to lose his position is comparable to a lord losing his state. The *Rites* says: 'A lord performs the ceremonial ploughing to help provide for the sacrificial grain, while his wife ceremonially assists tending silkworms to help provide the ritual robes for sacrifice. When the sacrificial beasts are not fattened, or the sacrificial grain impure, or the ritual robes incomplete, one dare not perform sacrifice. When a gentleman has no allotment of landed income then neither shall he sacrifice.' If one dare not perform sacrifice when the offerings, vessels, or robes are incomplete, then is it not cause for condolence when one dare not even host a banquet?"

"Why did Confucius always carry a ritual gift to offer?"

"Service is to a gentleman as ploughing is to a farmer: would a farmer ever depart from his state without taking ploughshare and hoe?"

"Men of Jin serve in office as in any state, yet I have never yet known any who treat the matter with such urgency. If it is indeed such an urgent affair, why does the *junzi* find the decision to take office so difficult?"

"When a boy is born, all parents hope that he will someday

3B.3 In citing the *Rites*, it is not clear whether Mencius quotes a single text, a commonly encountered textual formula, or oral tradition. The books now recognized as ritual classics were compiled later, during the Han Dynasty, and the sections of them that have been found in recovered bamboo text versions do not include these sorts of ceremonial details.

"Men of Jin" actually refers to office seekers from the state of Wei, which had formerly been part of the Spring & Autumn era state of Jin.

set up a household, and when a girl is born, they hope she will marry. But if young people do not wait for the permission of their parents or the parley of a go-between, and bore holes in the wall to peek at one another or climb over it to rendezvous in secret, then parents and countrymen alike will despise them. Men of old all wished to serve, but they also hated straying from the Dao. To stray from the Dao as one goes forth is of a kind with boring peepholes in the wall."

3B.4 Peng Geng asked, "You travel from state to state, living off their lords, trailed by dozens of carts and hundreds of followers. Is this not extravagant?"

Mencius said, "If it is not in accord with the Dao, one may not accept so much as a basket of rice. But if it is in accord with the Dao, one may follow the example of Shun, who accepted the world from Yao without it being considered extravagant – that is, unless you would consider it so."

"No, but it is not right for a gentleman not to work for his support."

"Would you not allow the exchange of goods among those of different occupations, so that the surplus of one supplies the deficiency of another? If you would allow it, then you would support carpenters and chariot makers. Now, let's say we have a man here who is filial at home and deferential to elders abroad, who cultivates the Dao of the former kings for the benefit of students who may come to him. Yet you would not support such a man? How can you so revere the carpenter and chariot maker yet hold the man of humanity and right in such low esteem?"

"The intent of the carpenter and chariot maker is to make a living. Does the *junzi* pursue the Dao with the intention of making a living by it?"

Mencius said, "What matter is his intention to you? If what he does is of service to you, you ought to provide him support in all appropriate instances. Do you provide support to people for their intentions or for their work?"

"For their intentions."

"Let's say there's a man here smashing your roof tiles as he throws paint on your walls. But his intention is that he will receive payment; would you provide it?"

"No."

"Then you actually provide support for people because of their work, not because of their intentions."

3B.4 While this description of Mencius may appear exaggerated, it is elsewhere documented that some masters did indeed travel with huge retinues of disciples.

3B.5 Wan Zhang asked, saying, "Song is a small state, but now it is planning to institute kingly governance. If the states of Qi and Chu are dismayed by this and make war against Song, what should be done?"

3B.5 The ruler of Song, who had been recognized as holding the rank of duke under the traditional

Mencius said, "When Tang dwelt in Bo he was neighbor to the state of Ge. The Earl of Ge was dissolute and did not perform sacrifices. Tang sent an emissary to ask, 'Why do you perform no sacrifices?' 'I cannot supply sacrificial beasts,' was the reply. So Tang ordered that oxen and sheep be given to Ge. The Earl ate them and still made no sacrifice. Tang once again sent an emissary to ask, 'Why do you perform no sacrifices?' 'I cannot supply the sacrificial grains,' was the reply. So Tang ordered the men of Bo to go off to Ge and plough their lands for them, while the old and weak followed with provisions. The Earl led his people to waylay them and plunder their wine and food, millet and rice. Any who resisted were killed. Even a child carrying grain and meat provisions was killed and his provisions seized. When the *Documents* says, 'The Earl of Ge treated the provisioners as the enemy,' this is what it refers to. It was because he killed this boy that Tang launched a punitive campaign against Ge. All within the four quarters said, 'It is not that he wishes to enrich himself with the world; he seeks revenge for common men and women.'

"'Tang began his campaigns with Ge.' After eleven punitive campaigns there remained no peer in the world to be his adversary. When he campaigned in the east, the western Yi tribes complained; when he campaigned in the south, the northern Di tribes complained. They said, 'Why does he put us last?' The people looked towards him as they long for rain during drought. People continued trading at market without interruption and farmers continued their weeding: Tang punished their rulers and comforted the people like the fall of timely rain, bringing them great joy. The *Documents* says, 'Why are we last? When he finally comes our suffering will end!'

"'There were still those who would not submit as subjects, so he campaigned to the east, bringing peace to men and women there. They loaded silk fabrics, dark bolts and yellow, into their baskets to present as gifts to the Zhou king, seeking the honor of submission as subjects of the great city of Zhou.' Gentlemen filled the baskets with silk to welcome the gentlemen of Zhou, and the common people welcomed the commoners with baskets of food and jugs of drink, for the king had rescued the people from the midst of fire and flood, seizing their cruel rulers alone. The 'Great Oath' says:

> My martial might raised high,
> I crossed over the frontier,
> Seized the cruel ruler there,
> And broadened the slaughter.
> Surpassing Tang, my glory!

This tells us the consequences of not implementing kingly governance. If King of Song were to put kingly governance into

system of titles under the royal Zhou kings, assumed the title of king in 328. This proclamation may lie behind Wan Zhang's question, and if so, it may mean that Mencius traveled to Song prior to his stay in Liang (Wei).

This tale about Tang, who ultimately overthrew the Xia royal house and founded the Shang Dynasty, is set in the period prior to his conquest. The tale was referred to in 1B.3.

Mencius has here shifted to a description of the establishment of the Zhou Dynasty by King Wu.

practice, within the four quarters all would raise their heads and gaze towards him, wishing he were their ruler. Though Qi and Chu may be great states, what would he have to fear from them?"

3B.6 When he was in Song, Mencius spoke with Dai Busheng. "Do you wish that your King become good? Let me speak plainly. Suppose there were a grandee of Chu who wanted his son to learn the language of Qi. Would he hire a man of Qi or a man of Chu to be his son's tutor?"

"He would have a man of Qi tutor his son."

"If a single man of Qi acted as his tutor, with a host of men from Chu chattering in the language of Chu, though you beat the boy daily to make him speak in Qi it would be no use. But if you sent the boy off and had him live for several years in the neighborhoods of Qi, though you beat him daily you could not make him speak in Chu.

"Now, you tell me that Xue Juzhou is a good man and that you have placed him in the King's household. If everyone high and low, old and young in the King's household were like Xue Juzhou, with whom could the King join to do bad? But if all others high and low, old and young are not like Xue Juzhou, then through whom can the King do good? How can a single Xue Juzhou influence the King on his own?"

3B.6 The people of the southern state of Chu were ethnically distinct from the people of northern China, and they spoke a different native language (unrelated to any language ancestral to later Chinese).

3B.7 Gongsun Chou asked, "What is the principle behind your policy of declining to meet with ruling lords?"

Mencius said, "In the past, if one was not a subject one did not appear in audience. Duangan Mu leapt over a wall to avoid a visit, and Xie Liu shut his gate against one. This is going too far; when so compelled it is permissible to meet. Yang Huo wished to meet with Confucius and was unwilling to violate ritual. As ritual required that if a grandee presented a gift to a gentleman while the gentleman was not at home to accept it, the gentleman go give thanks to the grandee at his residence, Yang Huo spied out a time when Confucius was out and sent him a steamed piglet. Confucius likewise spied out a time when Yang Huo was out to pay the required visit, but just at that moment Yang Huo returned. How could Confucius have failed to meet with him? Zengzi said, 'It is more tiring to shrug one's shoulders and smile like a sycophant than to farm the fields in summer.' Zilu said, 'When men talk to those they disapprove of, you see how blushes color their faces. I am not capable of such conduct.' From this you can see what the self-cultivation of a *junzi* consists in."

3B.7 According to stories about them, Duangan Mu would have been visited by Marquis Wen of Wei, and Xie Liu by Duke Mu of Lu (on Xie Liu, see 2B.11).

The tale about Yang Huo and Confucius is recounted in detail in *Analects* 17.1.

3B.8 When Mencius was in Song, Dai Yingzhi said to him, "At the present time, we would not be able to abolish our customs and market taxes and rely solely on a tax of one in ten. How would it

be if we simply reduce the current rates a bit and repeal those other taxes next year?"

Mencius said, "Let's say there were a man who stole one of his neighbor's chickens every day. What if someone said to him, 'This is not how a *junzi* behaves!' and he replied, 'How would it be if I simply reduce my current rate a bit, steal a chicken every month instead, and then stop next year?'

"If you realize it is wrong, stop immediately. Why wait for next year?"

3B.9 Gongduzi said, "Master, outsiders all say you are fond of disputation. What do you say to that?"

Mencius said, "How could it be that I am fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. The world has existed for a long time, now in order, now in chaos. In the time of Yao, the waters ran awry and flooded the central states; eels and dragons dwelt there and the people had no security. The people in the lowlands nested their homes on stilts; the people in the highlands dwelt in caves. The *Documents* says: 'The deluge sounded an alarm for us,' thereby referring to this flood. Yao sent Yu to control it. Yu cut channels through the land to guide the waters to the sea and drove the eels and dragons away into the marshlands. The water that springs from the earth formed the Yangzi, Huai, Han, and Yellow Rivers. As the danger receded and the harm from beasts subsided, people were at last able to build their homes on level soil.

"But after the deaths of Yao and Shun the Dao of the sages declined and tyrants arose one after another. They leveled homes in order to create their pleasure ponds and the people had no place to rest. They took fields out of cultivation to create their pleasure parks and the people had no way to eat. And then there arose errant teachings and patterns of violent conduct. With the spread of parks, ponds, and lakes, wild birds and beasts returned, and by the time of the last Shang ruler Zhòu, the world was in chaos once again. The Duke of Zhou guided King Wu to execute Zhòu. He waged war against Yan for three years and punished its lord. He drove Fei Lian to the edge of the sea, and killed him there. Altogether, he annexed fifty states. He drove tigers, leopards, rhinoceroses, and elephants to distant lands, and the people of the world were joyful. The *Documents* says, 'How gleaming, the plans of King Wen! And receiving them, King Wu's deeds shone bright. They enlighten and aid us of later days so we can keep to the upright without defect.'

"But each generation declined and the Dao fell towards obscurity; errant teachings and patterns of violent conduct arose once again, until there came to be subjects who murdered their lords and children who murdered their fathers. Confucius was

3B.9 The sage ruler Yu, supposed founder of the Xia Dynasty, was earlier the hero of a flood myth, details of which survive in Confucian accounts, which portray him rising to the throne as a result of his services as an officer of water conservation in the bureaucracy of Yao.

The narrative here shifts to tales of the founding of the Zhou Dynasty.

alarmed, and he created the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which records the state of affairs from the view of the Son of Heaven. This is why Confucius said, 'It will be on the basis of the *Annals* that I am known; it will be on the basis of the *Annals* that I am vilified.'

"But no sage king has arisen. The lords of the states act with abandon and gentlemen in retirement proclaim deviant doctrines. The words of Yang Zhu and Mo Di fill the world such that those who do not preach the doctrines of Yang Zhu preach those of Mozi. The maxim of the Yangists is 'Each for himself,' a world of men without rulers; the maxim of the Mohists is 'universal love,' a world of men without fathers. To know no father and no ruler – this is to be nothing but a beast! Gongming Yi said, 'When a ruler has fat meats in his kitchens and fat horses in his stables while his people are pale with hunger and starved corpses lie in the wastelands, he leads the beasts and devours the people.' If the *dao*s of Yang and Mo don't cease and the Dao of Confucius is not clear to all, then deviant doctrines will deceive the people and humanity and righteousness will be blocked. To block out humanity and righteousness is to lead the beasts and devour the people, and the people will be led to eat one another.

"This is why I am alarmed, and why I defend the Dao of the past sages and confront Yangists and Mohists, driving out depraved speech so that errant doctrines will no longer flourish. When they flourish in one's heart, they infect one's acts, when they flourish in one's acts, they infect one's governance – were a sage to arise once again, he would not change a single word of mine.

"In ancient times, Yu tamed the flood and the world was at peace. The Duke of Zhou subjugated the Yi and Di tribes, drove the fierce beasts away, and the people were at peace. And when Confucius composed the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, rebellious subjects and cut-throat sons were terrified. The *Poetry* says

> The Rong and the Di indeed he attacked,
> Jing and Shu were punished indeed:
> Resist us none shall dare!

The Duke of Zhou attacked those who acknowledged neither father nor lord. I too wish to rectify the men's hearts, put an end to heretical teachings, impede perverse practices, and banish wanton speech in order to carry on the tradition of these three sages. How could it be that I am fond of disputation? I simply have no choice. He whose speech can impede the words of Yang and Mo is the disciple of sages."

The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is one of the Five Confucian Classics. Originally the records of court scribes, the text came to be viewed as a wisdom text, coded with an esoteric message placed in it by Confucius. See the **Glossary**.

Yang Zhu and Mo Di (Mozi) are the men identified by Mencius as his chief philosophical adversaries. For more about them, see the **Index of Persons**.

3B.10 Kuang Zhang said, "How could anyone say that Chen Zhongzi isn't an incorruptible man? When he dwelt in Wuling, he was able to endure three days without food, though his ears grew deaf and his eyes grew blind. By a well there was a pear half eaten by maggots – he had to crawl to reach it, and only after three mouthfuls did his ears and eyes recover their sense."

Mencius said, "Among the gentlemen of Qi, I most certainly consider Zhongzi the finest. But wherein can he be considered incorruptible? If one were to press Zhongzi's discipline to the limit, one could only live like an earthworm, eating parched soil above and drinking from the Yellow Springs below. Was it a Bo Yi who built the home where Zhongzi lives, or was it a man like Bandit Zhi? Was the millet that he ate grown by Bo Yi or Bandit Zhi? We don't know."

Kuang Zhang said, "What does that matter? He himself wove sandals while his wife worked hemp to barter for their needs."

"Zhongzi came from an hereditary family of Qi nobility. His elder brother, Dai, received an income of ten thousand measures from the fields of Ge, but Zhongzi felt his brother's income was not righteously got and he would not be supported by it. He felt his brother's house was not righteously got and he would not live in it. He dwelt in Wuling, apart from his brother and mother. One day, he returned home for a visit and found that someone had presented his brother with a live goose. He furrowed his brow and said, 'What use is a honker like this?' On another day, his mother slaughtered the goose and served it to him to eat. Just then, his brother walked in and said, 'That's the "honker's" meat!' Zhongzi ran outside and vomited. What his mother served he would not eat, but he ate what his wife served him. He wouldn't live in his brother's home but he would still live in Wuling. We can certainly call him someone who followed principle to the limit, but anyone who wished to be like Zhongzi would have to be an earthworm to press his discipline to the limit."

b b b

3B.10 Chen Zhongzi was a patrician in the state of Qi.

Bo Yi was a sage known for extreme purity, while Bandit Zhi is so closely associated with crime that the sobriquet "Bandit" is generally attached to his as if it were his family name.

BOOK 4
LI LOU
INTRODUCTION

Book 4 is very different in structure from the preceding three books. One reflection of this is that it includes the same number of individual entries as the first three books combined, a function of the many brief aphorisms that appear in groups in both parts of Book 4. Another feature of Book 4 is that in only about fifteen percent of its passages is there any speaker other than Mencius – this is very much a collection of quotations. In this respect, Book 4 resembles Book 7, which is also principally composed of diverse brief aphorisms, with almost as few passages involving interlocutors other than Mencius.

Towards the close of Book 4B, we encounter passages with prolonged narrative of a kind unseen in other books. For example, in 4B.31, an anonymous voice – one that usually simply tells us the setting for a passage – provides a lengthy introduction, including several levels of anecdotal materials, before Mencius appears to provide a brief, concluding comment. And in 4B.33 the narrative voice provides its own closing comment to an extended parable; Mencius is not invoked at all.

Although most of Book 4 seems stripped of the context of time and place, in fact, in all instances where such context does appear, the indication is that the setting for the passage in question is Qi. The only instance where Mencius is in conversation with a ruler (4B.3), King Xuan of Qi is the person he advises. Events involving the Qi grandee Wang Huan (Zi'ao), whom Mencius particularly despised, appear at 4A.24-25, 4B.27. Other courtiers in Qi appear as well (4A.17; 4B.32). Consequently, it may be that Book 4 represents a collection of Mencius's teachings compiled by his students during the time when he served as an advisor to King Xuan, about 315-313.

Because it has neither the thematic coherence of some other books in the <u>Mencius</u>, nor the dramatic biographical content that enlivens the text, Book 4 may seem less memorable. But it includes many philosophically interesting passages, including some that are as impressive as any in the larger text: for example, 4A.12, which seems to have been imported into the famous <u>Doctrine of the Mean</u>, 4A.17, which includes one of Mencius's most compelling examples of how context affects ethical principles, and 4B.26, which portrays the way that our cognitive intelligence may act in accord with the spontaneous dispositions of our nature.

BOOK 4
LI LOU
PART A

4A.1 Mencius said, "Though one may have the sight of Li Lou and the skill of Gongshuzi, without the compass and T-square one cannot make perfect squares and circles, and even with the keen hearing of Shi Kuang, one cannot adjust the five notes of the scale without the six pitch pipes. As for the Dao of Yao and Shun, if one does not employ humane governance, one cannot bring peace and order to the world. There may be those who possess both a sense of humanity and the reputation of a humane ruler, but the people will not benefit from them and they will set no example for posterity unless they implement the Dao of the former kings. Thus it is said, 'Good intentions alone cannot govern; good laws cannot implement themselves.' The *Poetry* says:

> Never stray and never forget;
> Lead in all by the old codes.

There has never been one who adhered to the model of the former kings and went wrong.

"The sages, having exhausted the strength of their eyes, augmented it by creating the compass and T-square, level and plumb line, which can inexhaustibly make squares and circles, level and set plumb. Having exhausted the strength of their ears, they augmented it by creating the six pitch pipes, which can inexhaustibly adjust the five tones. Having exhausted their feelings and thoughts, they augmented them by creating governance intolerant of human suffering, and humanity spread over the world. Thus it is said, 'Building high, stay on the hilltops and ridges; digging deep, stay by the rivers and lakes.' Could one call a ruler wise who did not stay on the Dao of the former kings?

"This is why it is appropriate that high offices be occupied solely by men of humanity. To place one who is not humane in high office is to scatter his wickedness over the masses. When those who rule lack the guidelines of the Dao, those below lack adherence to any standards; when courtiers keep no faith with the Dao, workmen keep no faith with their measures; when the nobility violate right, commoners violate laws. If such a state survives it is by luck alone. Thus it is said, 'It is not crumbling walls and sparse armaments that bring disaster to a state, nor is it unreclaimed fields and scarce goods that cripple it: if those above lack ritual propriety and those below lack learning, bandit hoards will abound and the end will be near.' The *Poetry* says:

4A.1 Li Lou was a legendary figure, famous for keen sight. Gongduzi was a craftsman of Lu during the Spring & Autumn period. Shi Kuang (Music Master Shi) was proverbial as an outstanding musician.

Tian is poised to topple,
No more of this babble!

Babble is empty speech. When a man serves his ruler without righteousness, when his comportment lacks ritual, when his words contravene the Dao of the former kings, it is 'empty speech.' Thus it is said: 'One who remonstrates with his lord is called reverent. One who expounds the good to him and closes off the deviant is called respectful. One who says, "My lord is not capable of it" is called a thief.'"

4A.2 Mencius said, "The compass and T-square are the ultimate standards for circles and squares; the sage is the ultimate standard for human relationships. One who wishes to act as a ruler must exhaust the Dao of the ruler; one who wishes to act as a minister must exhaust the Dao of the minister. For both it is simply a matter of emulating Yao and Shun. One who does not serve his ruler as Shun served Yao does not show respect for his ruler; one who does not govern the people as Yao governed the people is a thief to his people. Confucius said, 'There are only two *dao*s: to be humane or to be inhumane.'

"When a ruler tyrannizes his people to an extreme, he himself will be assassinated and his state will perish. If he avoids the extreme, he himself will be in danger and his territory reduced. Such rulers are memorialized with the posthumous names You and Li. A hundred generations of filial sons and loving descendants can never alter them. This is what the *Poetry* means when it says:

The Yin gazed towards a mirror not far off,
The age of the kings of the Xia.

4A.2 The names used to refer to Kings, Dukes, and others in texts like the *Mencius* are titles that were given these rulers posthumously, according to Zhou custom. Kings considered weak received the name You; those considered harsh were named Li.

4A.3 Mencius said, "The Three Dynasties gained the world by means of humanity; they lost the world through being inhumane. And so it is with the rise and fall of the states. When the Son of Heaven is inhumane, he cannot protect the four quarters; when the lords of states are inhumane, they cannot protect their altars of state; when high officers and grandees are inhumane, they cannot protect their ancestral shrines; when ordinary gentlemen and common people are inhumane, they cannot protect their four limbs. Thus, hating the thought of death but delighting in acting with inhumanity is like hating to be drunk and forcing down wine."

4A.3 Zhou state religion included prayer and sacrifice to deities of the soil and harvest, who were worshipped at outdoor shrines. These "altars of state" were used as a metaphor for the state itself

4A.4 Mencius said, "When those one loves do not respond with affection, reflect on your humanity. When those one governs do not respond with order, reflect on your wisdom. When those one treats with ritual courtesy do not return it, reflect on your respectfulness. If in any action there is a failing, seek it out within yourself. When one's person is correct, the world will turn to you.

The *Poetry* says:

> Ever be worthy of Tian's Mandate
> And seek out your own many blessings.

4A.5 Mencius said, "People generally speak of 'the world,' 'the state,' and 'the family.' The root of the world lies in the state; the root of the state lies in the family; the root of the family lies in the person."

4A.5 The logic of this passage lies in the word for the "state," which was a compound combining "state" and "family" (*guojia* 國家). (The term is still used.)

4A.6 Mencius said, "There is nothing difficult about governing: the key lies in not offending the great houses. What the great houses long for is what the entire state longs for, and what the entire state longs for is what the world longs for. In this way, the example of virtuous policy will spread like a flood to the four quarters."

4A.6 The "great houses" were the powerful hereditary nobility.

4A.7 Mencius said, "When the Dao prevails in the world, those of little virtue serve those of great virtue, and those of little worthiness serve great worthies. When the Dao does not prevail, the small serve the large and the weak serve the strong. These two conditions are determined by Tian. Those who comply with Tian survive; those who act contrary to Tian perish.

"Duke Jing of Qi said, 'Since we are unable to command, if we also refuse to accept commands our state will be cut down.' Weeping, he sent his daughter off to become the wife of the lord of Wu.

4A.7 Duke Jing ruled in the era of Confucius. At that time, the Yangzi Delta state of Wu, viewed as a barbarian state, became a threat to Qi, and this diplomatic marriage was arranged.

"But now, small states study the large ones and feel it is shameful to accept commands from states greater than they – this is like the pupil feeling ashamed to accept the commands of the teacher. If they are ashamed, they should take lessons from King Wen. If the ruler of a large state were to take King Wen as his teacher he would govern the world within five years, while the ruler of a small state would govern the world in seven. The *Poetry* says:

> The heirs of the Shang
> Were many, beyond number,
> But the Lord above decreed
> They submit to the Zhou.
> They submitted to the Zhou:
> Tian's decree is not fixed,
> And the men of Yin, fair and quick,
> Pour the wine at royal Zhou shrines.

Confucius said, 'Against the humane man none can prevail by strength of numbers; were the ruler of a state to love humanity, none in the world could be his enemy.' But to wish to have no

"Enemy" implies an adversary who is an equal

enemy in the world by means other than humanity would be like grasping a scalding thing without first chilling one's hand in water. The *Poetry* says:

> Who grips a scalding thing
> Without chilling his hand in water?

match.

4A.8 Mencius said, "Is it possible to reason with a man who is inhumane? He feels at ease with danger and looks to profit from calamity; he delights in the things that lead to his destruction. If one could reason with the inhumane there would be no perished states or fallen families. There is a children's jingle that goes:

> When waters all azure are clear,
> I shall wash the straps of my cap;
> If waters all azure are muddy
> Then I shall wash my feet.

Confucius said, 'Listen to this, my young men! When clear, the cap strings are washed, when muddy, the feet: it is the water that brings this on itself.' A man always disgraces himself before others hold him in disgrace; a family always destroys itself before others destroy it; a state always attacks itself before others attack it. The 'Taijia' puts it this way: 'Heaven-sent disaster one may hope to evade; when one brings disaster upon oneself one will surely die.'"

4A.8 This quote is from a lost chapter of the *Book of Documents*.

4A.9 Mencius said, "The reason the rulers Jie and Zhòu lost the world was because they lost the people, and the reason they lost the people was because they lost their hearts. There is a *dao* for gaining the world: if you gain the people then you gain the world. There is a *dao* for gaining the people: if you gain their hearts you gain the people. There is a *dao* for gaining the hearts of the people: together with them amass for them those things that you would desire, and do not impose upon them the things you would hate.

"People cleave to humane rulers as water flows downward and as beasts race towards the wilds. It is otters that drive fish to swim towards the depths, and hawks that drive little birds to fly into the brush: it was Jie and Zhòu who drove the people to Tang and King Wu. If there were among the rulers of today one who loved humanity, the other lords would drive the people to him on his behalf. Though he wished not to rule as a True King, his wish would be unfulfilled. But those today who wish to rule as True Kings are instead like men seeking to cure a seven year illness with mugwort dried only three years: if the drug has not been properly cured, the illness never will be. If a ruler has not set his heart on humanity, anxiety and disgrace will ever plague him as he sinks towards his death. The *Poetry* puts it this way:

4A.9 In traditional medicine, cured mugwort was applied to the skin and burnt in a process called moxibustion. The power of the mugwort

How can they be cleansed?
They join one another to drown."

4A.10 Mencius said, "One cannot reason with those who assault themselves, and one cannot do anything for those who throw themselves away. By those who assault themselves I mean those whose speech offends ritual and right, and those who say they do not have the ability to dwell in humanity or to follow the path of righteousness throw themselves away.

"Humanity is the safe haven of humankind and righteousness the human path. Alas for those who vacate their safe haven and do not dwell within it, and who stray from their proper path!"

4A.11 Mencius said, "The Dao is near at hand, yet people seek it afar; the task is easy, yet people seek it in difficulty. Let all people treat their parents as parents and elders as elders and the world will be at peace."

4A.12 Mencius said, "If a man in a subordinate position cannot gain the confidence of his superiors he will not be able to govern the people. There is a *dao* for gaining the support of superiors: if you are not trusted by your friends you will not gain the confidence of your superiors. There is a *dao* for being trusted by friends: if you are unable to please your parents you will not be trusted by your friends. There is a *dao* for pleasing your parents: if you examine yourself and find you do not have integrity within you will not be able to please your parents. There is a *dao* for gaining integrity within: if you do not see the good clearly you will not have integrity within.

"Thus integrity is the Dao of Tian and aspiring to integrity is the Dao of man. There has never been a man who has had thorough integrity yet been unable to move others; there has never been a man without integrity who has been able to move others."

4A.13 Mencius said, "Bo Yi fled from Zhòu and dwelt on the northern seacoast. When he heard that King Wen had arisen, he stirred, saying, 'Why not return to follow him? I have heard that this Lord of the West takes good care of the aged.' Tai Gong fled from Zhòu and dwelt on the eastern seacoast. When he heard that King Wen had arisen, he stirred, saying, 'Why not return to follow him? I have heard that this Lord of the West takes good care of the aged.' These two old men were the most excellent old men in the world, and when they returned for King Wen it was the fathers of the world returning – and who else would the sons go to? If any of today's lords would implement the governance of King Wen, he would govern the world within seven years."

was deemed proportional to its age.

4A.12 This passage can be found in the text, *Doctrine of the Mean*. The term translated "integrity" here became a key element of Confucian doctrine, though it is rare in the *Mencius*. See the **Glossary** for more detail.

4A.13 The Lord of the West was a title given King Wen during his life.

Tai Gong was King Wu's chief military aide during the conquest of the Shang.

4A.14 Mencius said, "When Ran Qiu served as steward of the Ji family, he was unable to improve the virtue of their governance and the levy of grain tax doubled from former levels. Confucius said, 'Qiu is no follower of mine! Young men, you have my permission to sound the drums and drive him away.' From this we see that any man who helped a ruler grow rich without putting humane governance into practice would be cast off by Confucius, to say nothing of those who fought wars on his behalf. To make war over contended territory and slaughter until corpses cover the plain, or to lay siege to towns and slaughter until corpses are piled within the walls – that is what is meant when we speak of leading the soil of one's domain and devouring the flesh of one's people: death is too light a penalty for such crimes. Therefore, those who excel in the art of war must suffer the gravest punishment; those who fashion alliances of war among lords are next; those who merely reclaim lands to exhaust the wealth of the soil are next."

4A.14 Ran Qiu was a senior disciple of Confucius. The text quotes a passage found in *Analects* 11.17.

4A.15 Mencius said, "Nothing is better in examining a man than to observe the pupils of his eyes. They cannot conceal his faults. If he is upright within his breast then his eyes will be clear; if he is not, they will be murky. Listen to his speech, stare into his eyes – where can he hide?"

4A.16 Mencius said, "Those who are respectful do not insult others; those who are thrifty do not seize what belongs to others. A ruler who insults his people and seizes what belongs to them, cares only that he not be disobeyed; how could he be respectful and thrifty? How can fine words and a smiling countenance be mistaken for respect and thrift?"

4A.17 Chunyu Kun said, "Is it true that according to the rites, men and women must not touch one another?"

"That is what the rites prescribe," said Mencius.

"If your sister-in-law were drowning, would you extend her your hand?"

Mencius said, "A man who would not extend his hand to a drowning sister-in-law would be a wild beast. That men and women must not touch one another is ritual; extending one's hand to a drowning sister-in-law is balancing circumstances."

Chunyu Kun said, "Today, the world is drowning. Why do you, Sir, not extend your hand to it?"

"When the world is drowning, you extend the Dao to save it. When a sister-in-law is drowning you extend your hand – do you wish me to save the world with my hand?"

4A.17 Chunyu Kun was a courtier in Qi, famous for his jester-like wit.

The idea of "balancing" is related to the doctrine of Timeliness; a more extended discussion appears at 6B.1. See the **Glossary**.

4A.18 Gongsun Chou said, "Why should a *junzi* not be teacher to his own son?"

Mencius said, "Because by the nature of the circumstances it cannot work out. When one teaches, one must correct one's pupil. When correction does not work, anger follows, and that elicits a hurtful response: 'You teach by correcting me, but you yourself are not correct!' So in the end, father and son hurt one another, and this is bad.

"In the past, men taught one another's sons and father and son never rebuked one another. Rebuke leads to disaffection, and there is no misfortune so great as disaffection between father and son."

4A.19 Mencius said, "When it comes to duty, what is of greatest importance? Duty to one's parents. And what is most important to guard? One's character. I have heard of men who, never losing their characters, were able to serve their parents, but I have never heard of one who lost his character and was able to serve his parents. Who does not strive to serve? The root lies in serving one's parents. Who does not strive to stay on guard? The root lies in preserving one's character.

"When Zengzi cared for his father Zeng Xi, he always served him wine and meat, and when the dishes were cleared, Zengzi always asked to whom the remainder should be given. If his father asked whether food was left, Zengzi always said there was. After Zeng Xi died, Zengzi's son Zeng Yuan cared for Zengzi, and he always served him wine and meat. But when the dishes were cleared Zeng Yuan did not ask to whom the remainder should be given, and if his father asked whether food was left, he always said there was none, intending that the leftovers could be served at a later meal. This is what we call nourishing the mouth and body. But what Zengzi practiced may be called nourishing the will. One does well to serve his parent as Zengzi did.

4A.19 Among Confucians, Zengzi was particularly famous for his emphasis on the virtue of filiality.

4A.20 Mencius said, "Its men not being worth reproaching, the government is not worth censuring. Only a great man can set right the flaws in a ruler's heart. When the ruler is humane, none will fail to be humane; when the ruler is righteous, none will fail to be righteous. Once a ruler is set right, none will fail to be set right. As soon as one sets right the ruler the state is settled."

4A.20 The phrases on the ruler reappear in 4B.5.

4A.21 Mencius said, "One may encounter unexpected praise; one may encounter perfectionist criticism."

4A.22 Mencius said, "The reason men speak carelessly is because no one remonstrates with them."

4A.23 Mencius said, "The trouble with people is that they love to pose as teachers."

4A.24 Yuezhengzi traveled to Qi in the entourage of Zi'ao. When Yuezhengzi presented himself before Mencius, Mencius said, "Have you come to see me after all?"

Yuezhengzi said, "Sir, why do you speak in this way?"

"How many days since you arrived?"

"I arrived yesterday."

"Yesterday? Then I have good reason to speak in this way, don't I?"

"My lodging was not yet settled."

"Have you been taught that one does not pay a call on one's elder until one's lodging has been settled?"

Yuezhengzi said, "I am at fault."

4A.24 Yuezhengzi was a courtier in Lu who was also an associate of Mencius (see 1B.16).

Zi'ao was the courtesy name of Wang Huan, a courtier in Qi whom Mencius particularly despised (see 2B.6, 4B.27).

4A.25 Mencius spoke to Yuezhengzi, saying, "You travel in the entourage of Zi'ao to get your scraps to eat and sips to drink. I had not realized you were studying the ancient Dao in order to pursue scraps and sips."

4A.26 Mencius said, "There are three forms of unfiliality, and bearing no heirs is the worst. Shun married without telling his parents because he was afraid of leaving no heir. The *junzi* understands this as equivalent to telling his parents."

4A.26 On Shun, see 5A.2.

4A.27 Mencius said, "The substance of humanity is serving one's parents; the substance of right is obeying one's elders. The substance of wisdom is unswerving awareness of these two. The substance of ritual is the measured embellishment of these two. The substance of music is taking joy in these two, from which springs the joy of music. Once it springs forth, what can stop it? Unstoppable, all unaware one's feet begin to prance and one's hands begin to dance."

4A.27 The four virtues named are the "four seeds" discussed in 2A.6 and 6A.6. "Music" and "joy" were near homophones in ancient Chinese, represented by the same written word.

4A.28 Mencius said, "When the whole world turned towards him with great delight, only Shun could look upon this as he would look upon a trifle. One is not fully a man when one cannot please one's parents, and one is not fully a son when one cannot obey them. Shun exhausted the *dao* of service to his parents, and Gusou was finally pleased. And when Gusou was pleased the world was transformed, and the conduct of all the fathers and sons in the world was settled. This is called Great Filiality."

4A.28 Gusou is a name given to Shun's father. The name is actually a term for a blind man. The relationship between Shun and Gusou is a central issue in 5A.1, 2, and 4.

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BOOK 4
LI LOU
PART B

4B.1 Mencius said, "Shun was born in Zhuping, moved to Fuxia, and died at Mingtiao: he was a man of the Eastern Yi tribes. King Wen was born at Mt. Qi and died at Biying: he was a man of the Western Yi tribes. Their territories were separated by more than a thousand *li*, and their eras were separated by over a thousand years. But their wills prevailed alike through the central states: as perfectly matched as the two halves of a tally. As former sage and later sage, they aligned to a single measure."

4B.2 When Zichan was chief minister of government in the state of Zheng, he allowed his carriage to be used to ferry people across the Zhen and Wei Rivers. Mencius said, "He was kind, but he did not understand how to administer government. If each year, in the eleventh month, the footbridges were repaired, and, in the twelfth month, the carriage bridges were repaired, no one would have trouble crossing streams. A minister may order people out of his way on the road, so long as he manages the government well; why should he have to have ferry them one by one? When a man in charge of government seeks to please each person one by one, there will never be enough time."

4B.2 Zichan was a much admired figure of the late Spring and Autumn period. He is praised by Confucius in the *Analects*.

4B.3 Mencius said to King Xuan of Qi, "When the ruler looks upon his ministers as though they were his own hands and feet, the ministers look upon the ruler as though he were their heart and gut. When the ruler looks upon his ministers as though they were hounds and horses, the ministers look upon the ruler as just another countryman. When a ruler looks upon his ministers as though they were straw to strew over mud, the ministers look upon the ruler as a thieving enemy."

The King said, "According to ritual propriety, ministers wear mourning for a late ruler. Under what conditions does this apply?"

"When a minister's remonstrances are accepted and his advice followed so that benefit flows to the people; when a minister has cause to depart the state and the ruler dispatches one man to accompany him to the border and another to travel in advance and announce his arrival at his destination; when a departed minister's allotted lands are repossessed only if he does not return after three years; then one may say the ruler has followed three forms of ritual propriety, and for such a ruler one

wears mourning. But today, the remonstrations of a minister are not accepted, his advice is ignored, and no benefit flows to the people; if he has cause to depart the ruler detains him by force while he defames him to the state he is traveling to; and the day the minister does depart, the lands allocated to him are repossessed. Such rulers may be called thieving enemies, and one does not wear mourning for thieving enemies."

4B.4 Mencius said, "When an innocent gentleman is executed, a grandee may depart the state. When innocent people are slaughtered, gentlemen may leave the state."

4B.5 Mencius said, "When the ruler is humane, none will fail to be humane. When a ruler is righteous, none will fail to be righteous."

4B.6 Mencius said, "Acts of ritual that do not accord with ritual propriety, righteous acts that are not right – the great man does not perform these."

4B.7 Mencius said, "Men of moral balance nurture those who lack it, and men of mettle nurture those without it. This is why men are pleased to have worthy fathers and elder brothers. If men with moral balance abandon those who lack it and men of mettle abandon those without it, not an inch will separate the worthy and unworthy."

4B.8 Mencius said, "Only when there are things a man will not do is he capable of doing great things."

4B.9 Mencius said, "If you criticize the shortcomings of others, how will you respond when you encounter troubles later?"

4B.10 Mencius said, "Confucius was a man who never went too far."

4B.11 Mencius said, "A great man will not always keep his word, nor will he always see his action through. He follows only what is right."

4B.12 Mencius said, "A great man is one who has not lost the heart of a new born babe."

4B.13 Mencius said, "That a man has nurtured his parents does not signify him for great things. That he has also sent them off properly in death signifies him for great things."

4B.7 The notion of moral balance is captured by a single word, *zhong* 中: literally, a center, or a mean.

4B.14 Mencius said, "A *junzi* immerses people deeply in the Dao because he wishes them to grasp it for themselves. Once a person has grasped it, he will dwell in it at ease; once he dwells in it at ease, he will draw deeply from it. Once he draws deeply from it, then as he takes it to himself he will encounter its source at his every left and right. Hence the *junzi* wishes him to grasp it for himself."

4B.15 Mencius said, "The point of studying broadly and expounding in detail what you learn is to go back and expound the essential point."

4B.16 Mencius said, "Doing good for the purpose of subduing others has never worked, but if one does good for the purpose of nurturing others, one can subdue the world. There has never been anyone who ruled as a True King without the people of the world submitting in their hearts."

4B.17 Mencius said, "Speech without substance is inauspicious, and the substantial outcome of such inauspiciousness is the concealment of worthy men."

4B.18 Xuzi said, "Confucius repeatedly praised water, saying 'Oh, water! Oh, water!' What analogy did he mean to draw?"

Mencius said, "Water pours bubbling from its wellsprings, never ceasing night and day. It fills each depression in the ground before it goes forward, flowing on until it reaches the Four Seas. This is what it means to be rooted in a source: that was his analogy. And if one is not properly rooted, it is like the bursts of rain that come in the seventh and eighth months: the water collects, filling the ditches that line the fields, but we can stand waiting and watch it dry. This is why the *junzi* is ashamed if his reputation exceeds his actual accomplishments."

4B.18 *Analects* 9.17 reads: "The Master stood on the banks of the river. 'How it flows on, never ceasing, night and day!'"

4B.19 Mencius said, "The difference between man and the beasts is extremely slight. The common person discards it; the *junzi* preserves it. Shun's understanding of affairs and perceptiveness about human relationships was due to his proceeding from humanity and right, not a matter of applying humanity and right to his actions."

4B.20 Mencius said, "Yu hated fine wine and loved fine advice. Tang held to the mean and set no fixed criteria in appointing worthy men. King Wen regarded his people as though he were treating their wounds, and gazed towards the Dao as though first glimpsing it. King Wu never took those close to him for granted nor forgot those who were distant.

4B.20 Kings Wen and Wu are often treated as co-founders of the Zhou, thus the four kings listed here represent the three dynastic eras of Xia, Shang, and Zhou.

"The Duke of Zhou aspired to join the greatness of all three dynasties in carrying out these four principles. When in some respect he did not match up, he would raise his head in thought, all day and into the night, and then, chancing to grasp the solution, he would sit awaiting the dawn."

4B.21 Mencius said, "After the royal office of herald lapsed, there were no more poems, and it was then that annals first began. The *Sheng* of the state of Jin, the *Taowu* of Chu, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of Lu were all of the same nature. Their subjects were the likes of Duke Huan of Qi and Duke Wen of Jin, and their style was that of the court scribe. Confucius said, 'As for their meaning, that is what I have presumed to bring out.'"

4B.21 The *Book of Poetry* was said to have included folk songs collected by royal command. The *Sheng* and *Taowu* are texts known only through this report. On the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, see the **Glossary**.

4B.22 Mencius said, "The influence of a *junzi* drains away after the fifth generation; the influence of a petty man drains away after the fifth generation. I was not able to be a disciple of Confucius, but I have steeped myself in his influence through others."

4B.22 If one counts inclusively, Mencius was a fifth-generation disciple of Confucius.

4B.23 Mencius said, "When it is permissible either to take a thing or not to take it, to take it is an injury to integrity. When it is permissible either to give a thing or not to give it, to give it is an injury to generosity. When it is permissible either to die or not to die, to die is an injury to valor."

4B.24 Peng Meng studied archery under Yi. Having learned all there was of Yi's art, he believed that in all the world only Yi was superior to himself. Thereupon, Peng Meng killed Yi. Mencius commented, "It was indeed Yi who was at fault. Gongming Yi held that one should hold him blameless, but I say that his fault was merely less than Peng Meng's. How could one say he was blameless?

"The state of Zheng sent Zizhuo Ruzi to attack Weì, and Weì sent Yugong Zhisi to pursue him. Zizhuo Ruzi said, 'My illness is acting up today and I cannot lay hold of my bow. I shall die.' He asked the driver of his chariot, 'Who is that man pursuing me?'

"The driver said, 'It is Yugong Zhisi.'

"'Then I shall live!' said Zizhuo Ruzi.

"'Yugong Zhisi is the finest archer in Weì,' said the driver. 'Why do you say you will live, Sir?'

"'Yugong Zhisi learned archery from Yingong Zhituo, and Yingong Zhituo learned archery from me. Yingong Zhituo was an upright man, and anyone he chose to befriend must be an upright man as well.'

"When Yugong Zhisi caught up with them he said, 'Why

do you not lay hold of your bow, Sir?'

"Zizhuo Ruzi said, 'My illness is acting up today and I cannot lay hold of my bow.'

"'I learned archery from Yingong Zhituo, Sir, and Yingong Zhituo learned archery from you. I could not bear to employ your own art to harm you. Nevertheless, my duty today is an affair of my lord's and I dare not disregard it.'

"Thereupon he drew his arrows, tapped them against his chariot wheel to knock off the metal tips, shot four times, and drove off."

4B.25 Mencius said, "If Xizi were covered with filth people would hold their noses and pass her by. But though a man may be ugly, if he fasts and bathes he is fit to sacrifice to the Lord above."

4B.25 Xizi (Xi Shi) was a proverbial woman of greatest beauty.

4B.26 Mencius said, "When people speak of 'nature,' they refer only to our primitive being, and that is moved only by profit. What they dislike about intelligence is that it forces its way. If intelligence acted as Yu did in guiding the rivers, then they would not dislike it. When Yu guided the rivers, he followed their spontaneous courses. If intelligence also followed its spontaneous course, it would be great wisdom indeed. Heaven is high and the stars are distant, but if we seek after their primitive being, we can sit and predict the solstices for a thousand years."

4B.26 Yu is the legendary sage founder of the Xia Dynasty, who was originally a figure in a flood myth. His method of draining the great flood was to dredge the riverbeds, rather than to dig new channels for their flow.

4B.27 Gonghangzi lost his son, and the Vice-Marshal went to pay his respects. When he entered the gate some of those present went up to speak with him, while others went to speak with him after he took his seat. Mencius did not speak with him. The Vice-Marshal was displeased. "All the other gentlemen spoke with me," he said, "only Mencius did not. This was a slight to me."

Mencius heard of this and said, "According to ritual, one neither cuts across the place of others in order to engage in talk or ascends from one's proper step to engage in bows. My desire was to act in accord with ritual. Vice-Marshal Zi'ao took me to be slighting him! Strange, is it not?"

4B.27 The Vice-Marshal is Wang Huan (Zi'ao), the Qi grandee whom Mencius similarly insults in 2B.6.

4B.28 Mencius said, "A *junzi* differs from other men in the way he preserves his heart. The *junzi* preserves his heart through humanity and through ritual. A humane man cherishes others and one who abides by ritual respects others. When one cherishes others, others can be counted on to cherish him; when one respects others, others can be counted on to respect him.

"Let's say a man behaves offensively towards me. A *junzi* will always reflect, thinking, 'Surely I have failed to be humane; surely I have committed some breach of ritual. What else could have brought this on?' If upon such reflection he finds that he has,

in fact, acted humanely and with ritual, and yet the offensiveness continues, he will reflect further: 'Surely I have failed in some point of good faith.' If he finds that he acted in good faith and the offensiveness continues, the *junzi* will say, 'This is simply a perverse man, and between such a man and an animal there is nothing to choose. What is the point of arguing with an animal?' In this way, a *junzi* has constant concern, but not a moment's perplexity. And he has cause for concern: Shun was a man, and I too am a man. Shun was a model for the world, worthy of emulation by all later generations; what if I am nothing more than a common villager? That is indeed a cause for concern. And how should one be concerned about it? Simply be concerned about it as Shun was. As for perplexity, indeed the *junzi* has none at all. If it is not humane, he does not do it; if it is not ritual he does not perform it. Even should he encounter some passing vexation, the *junzi* will never be perplexed."

4B.29 Yu and Hou Ji lived in times of peace, yet they thrice traveled past their own gates and did not enter. Confucius praised their excellence. Yan Hui lived in a time of chaos, so he dwelt on a shabby lane, with a single bowl of rice and a dipperful of drink; others could not bear the cares, yet Yan Hui was unchanging in his joy. Confucius praised his excellence.

Mencius said, "Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui all followed the same Dao. Yu looked upon those in the world who were drowning as though he himself was responsible for drowning them. Hou Ji looked upon those in the world who were starving as though he himself was responsible for starving them. This is why they worked with such urgency. If Yu, Hou Ji, and Yan Hui had traded places, each would have acted as the others did.

"Now, if a member of your household should be attacked, though your hair was streaming loose and your cap untied it would be permissible to go save him. But if a village neighbor should be attacked, rushing to save him with your hair streaming loose and your cap untied would be mistaken. It would be permissible even to bolt your door."

4B.29 Although the ages of these legendary figures may have been free from war, each was celebrated for exhausting himself for the benefit of the people: Yu taming the floods, Hou Ji teaching the art of agriculture. A tale says that as Yu raced across the landscape to dredge the rivers, three times he passed his own home and was too busy to stop.

The description of Yan Hui is borrowed from *Analects* 6.11.

4B.30 Gongduzi said, "Kuang Zhang is termed unfilial throughout the state, yet you, Master, travel in company with him and treat him with the forms of courtesy. May I ask why?"

Mencius said, "There are five types of behavior that the world commonly refers to as unfilial. To be physically lazy and ignore the welfare of one's parents is the first. To gamble and drink, and so ignore the welfare of one's parents is the second. To be greedy for wealth that one reserves for wife and children, and so ignore the welfare of one's parents, is the third. To revel in sensual

pleasures and bring shame upon one's parents is the fourth. To be enamored of bravado and brawls and so endanger one's parents is the fifth.

"Does any one of these apply to Kuang Zhang? In his case, the son reproached the father over an issue of moral conduct and now the two have broken off relations. Reproaches are appropriate between friends, but between father and son, they are great despoilers of love. Do you think Kuang Zhang does not wish to have a family, and be a husband with children? Yet because he offended his father and is banished from his presence, he has sent away his wife and children, to live out his days without their care and support. He reasoned that were he not to do so, his offense would be great indeed, and *that* is precisely what Kuang Zhang is all about."

4B.31 When Zengzi dwelt in Wucheng, there were bandit troops from Yue. "The bandits are coming!" cried someone. "Shouldn't we leave this place?" Zengzi said, "Do not allow people to lodge in our compound or to cut from our firewood groves." As the bandit troops retreated, he said, "Repair our compound walls and roofs; we are going to return." After the bandit troops had retreated, Zengzi returned. Some followers said, "The Master has been treated here with such loyalty and respect – perhaps it was not appropriate that when the bandits came he set an example for the people by being the first to leave, and then returned when they were gone." Shenyu Xing said, "This is beyond your understanding. When there was a disturbance among the field workers in my family estate, none of the seventy men who were then followers of the Master became involved."

When Zisi dwelt in Weì, there were bandit troops from Qi. "The bandits are coming!" cried someone. "Shouldn't we leave this place?" Zisi said. "Were I to leave, by whose side would our lord defend his state?"

Mencius commented: "Zengzi and Zisi followed an identical *dao*. Zengzi was a teacher in the one instance, and a family head in the other. Zisi was an officer and was of minor rank. Had Zengzi and Zisi exchanged places, they would have acted identically."

4B.31 The coastal state of Yue, south of the Yangzi, enjoyed a brief period of power in the fifth century. Wucheng, in the southeast corner of Lu's territory, was near regions where Yue's influence was strong.

The weak state of Weì (different from Wei, a powerful state) was southwest of Qi.

4B.32 Chuzi told Mencius, "The King sent someone to spy on you, Sir, in order to learn whether you are after all different from other men."

Mencius said, "How would I be different? Yao and Shun were the same as other men!"

4B.33 There was a man of Qi who had a wife and a concubine who lived together with him. Whenever this man went out he always returned home having feasted on wine and meat. His wife asked him who the hosts were who served him these meals, and everyone he named was a man of wealth and high rank. The wife spoke to the concubine: “Whenever our husband goes out he always feasts on wine and meat before returning. I asked him who serves him these meals, and everyone he named was a man of wealth and high rank. Yet no prominent person has ever visited here. I am going to spy out where our husband goes.”

So the wife rose early one morning and slyly followed her husband wherever he went. He went all over the town, but never stopped to talk with anyone. Finally, he reached the eastern wall, where people were offering sacrifices at the graves of their dead. He begged for leftovers from them, and when these were not enough, he turned to beg from others. This was his means of feasting. His wife returned and told the concubine. “A husband should be someone we look up to and live out our days with. And now this!” Together, the two cursed their husband and stood crying on one another’s shoulders in the midst of their courtyard.

The husband knew nothing of this, and coming back home he strutted proudly before his wife and concubine, peering at them like a lord.

Men strive for wealth and high rank, profit and access to power. Their wives and concubines feel no shame and do not cry upon one another’s shoulders. But from the point of view of a *junzi*, how slim is the difference!

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Book 5
Wan Zhang
Introduction

Book 5 is principally about the interpretation of history and its ethical significance. All of Book 5A and the initial passages of Book 5B are devoted to this topic. Most of the remaining passages concern matters that bear on the need to reconcile Mencius's conduct with ethical principle, in the manner of Book 3B, although not all of these are framed as direct challenges to Mencius's behavior. The book seems likely to have been authored by the disciple whose name gives the book its title: Wan Zhang, who appears in thirteen of its eighteen passages.

Book 5A consists of only nine passages, most of which (5A.1-6) focus on the legendary sage rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu, with particular emphasis on the story of Shun. While these translations of early myths into historical accounts may seem fanciful and philosophically tangential to modern readers, they lie at the heart of Mencius's thinking about human beings and their ethical potential. While Mencius declares in 2A.2 that Confucius represents the pinnacle of sagehood, beyond any other historical exemplar, and seems to imply the same idea in 5B.1, it is in Mencius's treatment of the story of Shun that we see his ethical imagination most actively at work, picturing what the character of human perfection looks like when realized in the world. The improvisatory nature of Mencius's portrait of Shun can be seen again and again, as Mencius articulates the psychology behind Shun's statements and actions. Mencius saw in the Shun of myth an expression of innate moral goodness, a man acting purely from intuitive sentiment adequate to solve every problem. (Perhaps the most dramatic expression of this appears outside Book 5, in 7A.35.) The abstraction of the ideal person, who Mencius insists exists within each of us, ready to respond to the world with perfect morality, becomes a concrete individual in Mencius's Shun.

The sagely ideal that Confucius represents is less vividly imagined, but more clearly represented by a practical maxim: the doctrine of Timeliness. In 5B.1, we see the most complete statement of this rejection of rule-based ethics in favor of an ethics rooted in the character of people perfected through immersion in the ritual institutions designed by the sages. Confucius alone fully exemplifies this transcendence of ethical rules in perfected character. In 5A.8 and 5B.4 we see Mencius improvising commentary on Confucius's personal history in something of the same manner we see in his discussions of Shun.

Much of the remainder of Book 5B consists of Mencius explaining how such perfected character is reconciled with general rules for conduct, application rules for general rules, and so forth. The situational analyses that Mencius embarks on here seem ultimately secondary to the ethical authority of Mencius himself. As in 2B.2 and much of Book 3B, if we suspend confidence in that authority, Mencius often seems to be indulging in mere casuistry, manipulating rule interpretation and argument simply to indirectly rationalize (or directly, in the case of 5B.7) his own questionable judgment. The editors of the Mencius, however, seem to maintain faith that Mencius's answers are not self-interested, but are the products of learning, self-cultivation, and insight not available to those who have not undertaken the sage-sanctioned process of self-transformation.

BOOK 5
WAN ZHANG
PART A

5A.1 Wan Zhang asked, "'Shun went into the fields and cried out in tears to merciful Tian.' Why did he 'cry out in tears?'"

Mencius said, "It was a complaint of love."

Wan Zhang said, "They say, 'If your parents love you, be joyful yet never be lax. If your parents hate you, work hard and never complain.' Did Shun nevertheless complain?"

Mencius replied, "Chang Xi once asked Gongming Gao, 'I have understood your teaching about the text 'Shun went into the fields,' but I still don't understand, 'He cried out in tears to merciful Tian, to his parents.' Gongming Gao said, 'This is beyond your understanding.' Gongming Gao did not believe that in his heart a filial son could be so complacent as to think, 'I will simply till the fields with all my might and fulfill my duties as a son, and if my parents show no love, what is that to me?'

"Yao, the emperor, sent his children, nine sons and two daughters, to serve Shun in the fields, together with a hundred officers and stores of sheep, cattle, and grain. Most of the gentlemen of the world submitted themselves to Shun's service, and Yao was preparing to transfer control of the world to him. Yet because Shun had not found accord with his parents he felt like a homeless man with nowhere to turn. Anyone would welcome the approval of the gentlemen of the world, but that was not enough to dispel Shun's cares. Everyone desires wealth, but though he was wealthy with the riches of the world it was not enough to dispel his cares. Everyone desires sexual gratification, but though the emperor gave him his two daughters in marriage it was not enough to dispel his cares. Everyone desires high rank, but though he was honored as the Son of Heaven it was not enough to dispel his cares. None of these things could dispel his cares, only accord with his parents could do so.

"When we are young, we yearn for our parents. When we are old enough to have sexual desires, we yearn for youthful beauty. When we are old enough to have a family, we yearn for a wife and children. When we are ready to take office, we yearn for a lord, and without a lord's approval dissatisfaction burns within us. But the greatest filiality yearns for parents to the end of life. In Shun, I see a man who yearned for his parents even at fifty."

5A.1 In this and following passages, Wan Zhang asks Mencius to comment on details of historical tales, most of them legendary. In some cases, including this one, the specific text to which Wan Zhang refers is unknown. Mencius attributes this teaching to Gongming Gao, a disciple of Zengzi.

5A.2 Wan Zhang said, “The *Poetry* says:

> To take a bride what’s to be done?
> Parents must surely be told.

If this were truly so, it should apply to Shun more than anyone. How can we explain that Shun took a wife without telling his parents?”

Mencius said, “If he had told them, he would not have been allowed to take any wife. That male and female should live together is a fundamental human relationship. If he had told his parents, he would have had to discard this fundamental relationship, and he would have harbored bitterness against his parents. This is why he did not tell them.”

“I understand now why Shun did not tell his parents,” said Wan Zhang. “But why did Yao not tell them?”

“Yao also knew that if Shun’s parents were told Shun would not have been able to take a wife.”

Wan Zhang said, “Shun’s parents told him to repair the roof of their storehouse, and then his father Gusou set fire to the storehouse. They made him climb down to dredge the well and then covered up the well. His brother Xiang said, ‘The plans to kill my elder brother were all my doing. You, my parents, may have his cattle and sheep, and his stores of grain as well. But his halberd and spears shall be mine, his zither shall be mine, his bow shall be mine, and his two women shall tend to my bed.’ Then Xiang entered Shun’s household. Shun was on his bed, playing the zither. ‘I was just thinking of you!’ he said with chagrin. ‘I was thinking of my subjects,’ replied Shun. ‘Will you assist me in governing them?’ Now, am I wrong to think that Shun did not understand that Xiang was trying to murder him?

Mencius said, “How could he not have known? But his brother’s cares were like his own, as his brother’s joys were like his own.”

“Well then, was Shun pretending to be pleased with Xiang?”

“No. Once there was a man who presented a live fish to Zichan of Zheng. Zichan told the steward of his estate to raise it in his lake, but the steward cooked it instead, and then reported back, ‘When I first released it, it only stirred weakly, but after awhile it grew active and swam off.’ Zichan said, ‘It found its place! It found its place!’ When the steward emerged, he said, ‘Who says Zichan is wise? I’d already cooked the fish and eaten it and he cries, “It’s found its place!”’

“So you see, the *junzi* may be deceived by devices that follow the normal course of things, but he cannot be fooled by things that defy reason. Xiang appeared to Shun in the mode of a

5A.2 The diabolical nature of Shun’s parents and brother are an essential part of the Shun legend. Shun’s ability to love them despite their hatred and homicidal acts are what mark his character as exceptional and ideal. It does, however, create problems of reconciling Shun with other virtues: wisdom in this case, justice in cases below.

On Zichan, see 4B.2.

loving brother and Shun responded with pleasure in true accord with that spirit. What pretense was there in that?"

5A.3 Wan Zhang asked, "Every day Xiang looked for ways to kill Shun. When Shun was enthroned as the Son of Heaven, why did he exile Xiang?"

Mencius said, "He provided him an estate. Some say he exiled him."

Wan Zhang said, "'Shun drove Gonggong away to Youzhou; he exiled Huan Dou to Mount Chong; he cordoned the three Miao tribes off in Sanwei; and executed Gun at Mount Yu.' By dealing with these four criminals Shun brought all the world into submission, because he was punishing the inhumane. Xiang was as inhumane as could be, yet he gave him an estate at Youbi. What crime had the people of Youbi committed? Could a humane ruler really act in such a manner, to execute others but in the case of his younger brother to provide him an estate?"

Mencius said, "When it comes to a humane man's regard for his younger brother, he stores no anger against him, nor holds a grudge overnight: he simply loves him. Feeling close to him, he wishes him to have high rank; loving him, he wishes him to have wealth. Xiang's estate at Youbi provided him with wealth and high rank. Shun himself being Son of Heaven, how could he, feeling close to Xiang and loving him, have allowed him to remain an ordinary commoner?"

"May I ask, then, why some refer to this as an exile?"

"Xiang was not permitted to have his way in his estate. The Son of Heaven deputed officers to manage the land and provide Xiang with an income from its tax levies; that is why it is called an exile. How could he have abused the people of Youbi? Even so, Shun wished constantly to monitor him, and regularly summoned him to come to court. This is the meaning of the record, 'Not waiting for scheduled tribute visits, on the pretext of government business he kept contact with Youbi.'"

5A.4 Xianqiu Meng asked, "There is a saying: 'A gentleman of flourishing virtue cannot be treated as a subject by any ruler or as a son by his father.' When Shun faced south on his throne, Yao led the lords in facing north and paying court to him. Gusou also faced north and paid court to him. When Shun saw Gusou, his brow furrowed. Confucius said, 'How precarious it was! At that moment the world was in danger.' I am unsure whether this account is really true."

Mencius said, "No, it is not. These are not the words of the *junzi*, this is the account of a lout from the eastern wilds of Qi. When Yao grew old, Shun acted as regent on his behalf. The

5A.3 Wan Zhang's question is, most likely, why Shun *merely* exiled Xiang.

Part of Shun's legend involves expelling or killing a series of evil figures who threaten the order created by Yao. (Among these, Gun is notable in being, in legend, the wicked father of a different sage king, Yu.)

It is unclear whether Mencius is interpreting text on the basis of what he has been taught, or improvising, based on his understanding of Shun's character.

5A.4 This passage confronts a conflict between sage rule and filiality particular to the legend of Shun.

We do not know whether Mencius meant to refer to a specific individual.

'Canon of Yao' says, 'After twenty-eight years, Fangxun expired and the populace were as if they had lost a father or mother. For three years, the sound of the eight tones was stilled throughout the four quarters.' Confucius said, 'There are not two suns in the heavens, and the people do not have two kings.' If, having become Son of Heaven, Shun had led the lords of the world in mourning Yao's death for three years, this would have constituted having two Sons of Heaven."

Xianqiu Meng said, "I have now received instruction from you that Shun did not treat Yao as a subject. The *Poetry* says:

> No place under heaven
> Is not the land of the king,
> None to the coastal shore
> Not subjects of the king.

May I presume to ask how, once Shun was Son of Heaven, Gusou was not his subject?"

Mencius said, "That is not what this poem is speaking of. It concerns a man who devotes onerous labor on behalf of the king, but is unable even to care for his father and mother. He is saying, 'Nothing is not the business of the king, yet I labor thus despite exceptional worthiness.' When one explicates the *Poetry*, one must not use the words of the text to distort the meaning of its statements, or its statements to distort its intent: if you let your mind meet the intent of the poet you will grasp the meaning. Merely relying on the statements, consider the poem 'The Milky Way':

> The black-haired people of the Zhou
> Have not a solitary survivor.

If this were to be read literally, it would mean there are no survivors of the Zhou.

"The supreme duty of a filial son is to exalt his parents, and nothing exalts a parent more than to be sustained with the entire world. The utmost of exaltation is to be father to the Son of Heaven, and the utmost of sustenance is to be provided the entire world. The *Poetry* puts it this way:

> Thoughts forever filial,
> His filial thoughts a model.

The *Documents* says, 'He went to visit Gusou, all inspired with respect, and Gusou was truly acquiescent.' Is this what you meant by not being treated as a son by one's father?"

5A.5 Wan Zhang said, "Is it true that Yao gave the world to Shun?"

The "Canon of Yao" is a chapter of the *Book of Documents*.

Mencius deflects the argument here to a side issue, but his comments on explicating the odes of the *Book of Poetry* themselves became famous as principles of literary criticism.

Mencius said, “No. The Son of Heaven cannot bestow the world upon anyone.”

“But then, if Shun possessed the world, who gave it to him?”

“Tian bestowed it upon him.”

“Was Tian’s presentation an order clearly stated?”

“No,” said Mencius. “Tian does not speak. It simply reveals itself through action and event.”

“How did it do this?”

Mencius said, “The Son of Heaven may recommend a successor to Tian, but cannot make Tian bestow the world upon him. The lords of the states may recommend their successors to the Son of Heaven, but they cannot make him bestow their states upon them. Grandees may recommend successors to the lords of the states, but they cannot make their lords bestow their ranks upon them. Yao recommended Shun to Tian and Tian accepted him; he presented him to the people and the people accepted him. That is why we say Tian does not speak. It simply reveals itself through action and event.”

5A.5 Note that while grounding legitimacy of office in the divine will of Tian, in this passage Mencius essentially dissolves Tian into the will and action of the people.

“May I ask about the process whereby Shun was recommended to Tian and Tian accepted him, and by which Shun was presented to the people and the people accepted him?”

Mencius said, “He was tasked with conducting the sacrifices and all the spirits accepted the sacrifices; this constituted the acceptance of Tian. He was tasked with the management of affairs, and affairs were well ordered and the population content with them; this constituted the acceptance of the people. Tian gave the world to Shun and the people gave the world to Shun. This is why I say that the Son of Heaven cannot bestow the world upon anyone.

“Shun was chief minister to Yao for twenty-eight years: that is not something that could be accomplished through human agency alone – it was Tian’s doing. When Yao died and the three-year period of mourning came to an end, Shun went off south of Nanhe in order to leave the way open to Yao’s son. But the lords of the states did not attend the court of Yao’s son, and came instead to Shun; persons with disputes did not seek judgment from Yao’s son, but came instead to Shun; balladeers did not sing praises to Yao’s son, but sang instead of Shun. This is why I say it was the doing of Tian. Only afterwards did Shun return to the central states and mount the Son of Heaven’s throne. Had he simply occupied Yao’s mansion and forced out Yao’s son, it would have been usurpation, not the gift of Tian. This is what the ‘Great Oath’ means when it says:

> Tian sees through my people’s sight;
> Tian hears through my people’s ears.

The “Great Oath” is a chapter of the *Book of Documents*, now lost.

5A.6 Wan Zhang asked, "There is a saying among men that when the throne reached Yu there was a decline in virtue, because he passed it on to his son rather than to a worthy man. Is this correct?"

Mencius said, "No, it is not. When Tian bestows the world upon a worthy, then it is bestowed upon a worthy; if Tian bestows it upon a son, then it is bestowed upon a son. Shun recommended Yu to Tian and after seventeen years, Shun died. Once the three-year period of mourning came to an end, Yu went off to Yangcheng in order to leave the way open for Shun's son. But the people of the world followed Yu, just as they had followed Shun after Yao's death, rather than Yao's son.

"Yu recommended Yi to Tian, and seven years later, Yu died. Once the three-year period of mourning came to an end, Yi went off to the northern slope of Mount Ji in order to leave the way open for Yu's son Qi. Those who attended court or who sought judgments in disputes went to Qi, not to Yi. 'He is the son of our former lord,' they said. Balladeers sang the praises of Qi rather than Yi. 'He is the son of our former lord,' they said. Yao's son Danzhu was an unworthy man and likewise was the son of Shun. Shun had served as minister to Yao for many years, and so had Yu served Shun. Their beneficence to the people had persisted for a long time. Qi was a worthy man, well able to respect and continue the *dao* of Yu, while Yi had served Yu for only a few years, and his beneficence to the people had not yet been longstanding. As minister, the service of Yi was far different in length from that of Shun and Yu, and as for the worthiness of the rulers' sons, this was Tian's doing, not something brought about through human agency.

"That which is done through no man's doing is Tian; that which comes about through no man's agency is fate.

"For a commoner to gain possession of the world, he must have the virtue of Shun and Yu, but he must also gain the recommendation of the Son of Heaven besides – this is why the world was not bestowed upon Confucius. For one who would gain possession of the world through inheritance, Tian will only dispossess him if he is a man as bad as the rulers Jie and Zhòu – this is why the world was not bestowed upon worthies like Yi, Yi Yin, and the Duke of Zhou.

"Yi Yin was chief minister to Tang and led him to rule as king over the world. When Tang died, his eldest son Taiding had died before succeeding him, and so his younger sons occupied the throne, Waibing ruling for two years and Zhongren for four. Then Taiding's son Taijia inherited the succession, but he overturned the codes that Tang had established and Yi Yin banished him to Tong. After three years, Taijia repented of his errors. He reproached

5A.6 According to the history Mencius is following, Shun ceded the throne to Yu, thus passing his kingship on to a sage, rather than to his hereditary heir. Yu, however, passed the throne to his son, establishing the Xia Dynasty, first of the great ruling houses. From that point on, hereditary succession to the throne is the rule, broken only in the cases of successful rebellion that established the Shang and Zhou Dynasties.

Tang overthrew the Xia ruler Jie and established the Shang (Yin) Dynasty.

himself and reformed, and in Tong he became a man of humanity and right. He placed himself under Yi Yin's tutelage for three years, and then returned to his throne at the capital of Bo.

"The case of the Duke of Zhou was similar to those of Yi with regard to the Xia, and Yi Yin with regard to the Yin. Confucius said, 'The ceding of the throne to worthies by Yao and Shun, and the succession of the throne by inheritance of the Xia, Yin, and Zhou, all reflect a single principle.'"

5A.7 Wan Zhang asked, "People say that Yi Yin captured the attention of Tang by serving as a chef. Is that so?"

Mencius said, "No, it is not so. Yi Yin ploughed the unclaimed lands in Youxin, delighting in the Dao of Yao and Shun. If a ruler were not in accord with righteousness and the Dao, though he offered Yi Yin the world to take office, Yi Yin would not have given him a glance, nor looked at his gift of a thousand teams of horses. If it did not accord with righteousness and the Dao, he would not give a man a straw or accept one either. When Tang sent a messenger to request his presence with the ritual gift, Yi Yin said, 'Why should I accept Tang's gift? How could anything be better than working amidst the fields, delighting in the Dao of Yao and Shun?' Only after Tang sent an envoy for the third time did Yi Yin alter his view, saying, 'Rather than working amidst the fields, delighting in the Dao of Yao and Shun, it would be better for me to lead this ruler to become a Yao or a Shun and to lead his people to become the people of a Yao or a Shun. It would be good to see this with my own eyes. Tian gave birth to the people and ordered those who first understand to awaken those who are slow to understand; Tian ordered those who first awake to wake those who are slow to awake. Among Tian's people, I am one who has awakened early, and I will awaken the people by means of this Dao. If it is not I who awakens them, who else could there be?'

"When Yi Yin thought of the people of the world, and how ordinary husbands and wives had never been touched by the benefits Yao and Shun had bestowed, he felt as though they had been shoved into a ditch by his own hand, so heavy was the burden he took upon himself. So he went to Tang and urged him to campaign against the Xia and save the people. I have never heard of one who bends himself and make others upright, much less disgraces himself to set the world aright. Every sage conducts himself differently: some stay far from power, others keep close to it; some depart others do not. But in the end each simply maintains the purity of his character. I have heard that Yi Yin captured the attention of Tang by means of the Dao of Yao and Shun, but I have never heard that he did so through cooking. The 'Instructions of

5A.7 Yi Yin, chief minister to the Shang founder, Tang, is celebrated as a sage throughout the *Mencius*.

The "Instructions of Yi" is a lost chapter of the *Book of Documents*. The Mu

Yi' says, 'Tian's punishment was first begun within the Mu Palace; I started from Bo.'"

5A.8 Wan Zhang asked, "There are those who say that when Confucius was in Weì, he was hosted by Yong Ju, and in Qi he was hosted by the eunuch Ji Huan. Is that so?"

Mencius said, "No, it is not so. This is the invention of gossips. In Weì Confucius was hosted by Yan Chouyou. The wives of Mizi and of Zilu were sisters, and Mizi said to Zilu, 'If Confucius will lodge with me he will be able to become a high minister in Weì.' Zilu reported this to Confucius, who said, 'That is a matter of fate.' Confucius advanced according to ritual and retreated according to right; when it came to whether he would succeed or not, he said, 'That is a matter of fate.' But to lodge with Yong Ju and the eunuch Ji Huan would have violated both right and fate.

"Confucius was not favored in Lu or in Weì, and in Song, Huan, the Minister of War, made plans to assassinate him, so Confucius had to travel in disguise. At that time, Confucius was in dire straits. He lodged with Sicheng Zhenzi, who was an aide to Zhou, the Marquis of Chen.

"I have heard it said that one assesses courtiers by the visitors from afar whom they choose to host, and one assesses visitors from afar by those with whom they choose to lodge. If Confucius had lodged with Yong Ju and the eunuch Ji Huan, how could he have been Confucius?"

5A.9 Wan Zhang asked, "Some say that Boli Xi sold himself to a herdsman of Qin for five sheep pelts, and relied on his role feeding oxen to capture the attention of Duke Mu of Qin. Is this so?"

Mencius said, "No, it is not so. This is the invention of gossips. Boli Xi was a native of the state of Yu. The state of Jin presented jade from Chuiji and chariots from Qu to the ruler of Yu in exchange for permission to march its armies through Yu to attack Guo. Gong Zhiqi remonstrated against this, but Boli Xi did not, knowing that the Duke of Yu could not be persuaded. Already seventy years of age, he chose instead to depart Yu and go to Qin. If he had not understood that capturing the attention of Duke Mu of Qin by means of tending oxen would be sullying himself, could he be said to possess wisdom? Yet he refrained from remonstrating because he understood that his lord was not persuadable: could he be said to lack wisdom? Can he be termed unwise because he realized that the Duke of Yu was soon to fall and left the state beforehand? Can he be termed unwise in his opportune rise to prime minister in Qin, knowing that Duke Mu was a ruler with whom one could accomplish great things? As minister to Qin he

Palace was where the tyrant Jie resided; Bo was Tang's capital city.

5A.8 Yong Ju was a sycophantic favorite of Duke Ling of Weì. He is named here using characters meaning "ulcerous tumor." Ji Huan's surname means "thin and sickly."

Other texts indicate Yan Chouyou was the brother of Zilu's wife.

Mizi was, like Yong Ju, a court favorite.

Ascribing a future outcome to fate (*ming*) was a way of declining to act. Confucius uses this strategy in *Analects* 14.36.

The tale of Confucius's exigencies in Song is widely reported in early texts, as is Huan Tui's enmity (e.g., *Analects* 7.23).

5A.9 Boli Xi was a famous minister to Duke Mu of Qin (r. 659-621). Mencius's account of Boli Xi includes elements that match the historical record, but the tale that Wan Zhang recounts resembles one that is widely reported: that Duke Mu redeemed Boli Xi from the state of Chu for five sheep pelts when he was living in obscurity tending oxen.

made his ruler famous throughout the world and to posterity: could an unworthy man have done so? Any self-respecting villager would refuse to sell himself so that his lord would have success – would a worthy man do so?"

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BOOK 5
WAN ZHANG
PART B

5B.1 Mencius said, "Bo Yi would not look at improper sights nor listen to improper music. He would not serve a lord who was not his proper ruler; he would not direct a person who was not his proper subordinate. When there was order, he presented himself; when there was chaos, he absented himself. He could not bear to remain in any place where either government or population was perverse. He felt that to be together with common villagers was like sitting in mud and ashes wearing court robes and cap. During the rule of the tyrant Zhòu he withdrew to dwell on the shores of the Northern Sea, awaiting a day when the world would again be pure. Hence when they hear the themes of Bo Yi's conduct, the avaricious man becomes incorruptible and the timorous man becomes steadfast.

Yi Yin said, 'What lord may I not serve? What person may I not direct?' Whether in times of order or chaos, he would present himself nevertheless, saying, 'In giving birth to the people, Tian obliges those who first gain understanding to awaken those who gain understanding later, and those who awaken earlier must awaken the others. I am among those who have awakened first, and I will use this Dao to awaken the people.' He felt about the people of the world who had not enjoyed the benefits of Yao and Shun's bounty as if he himself had shoved them into a ditch. Thus did he burden himself with the weight of the world.

"Liuxia Hui felt no disgrace in serving a corrupt lord and no office was so petty that he would decline to serve in it. When he took his place at court he never failed to call attention to worthy talent in others, and he always acted according to the Dao. When he was dismissed, he was never resentful; when he was in impoverished circumstances he was never anxious. When together with common villagers he was all at ease and could not tear himself away. 'You are you and I am I. Though you may sit half clothed or naked by my side, what stain would that leave on me?' Hence when they hear the themes of Liuxia Hui's conduct, the narrow man becomes open minded and the miserly man becomes generous.

"When Confucius withdrew from the state of Qi, he rinsed his rice bowl and set right out. When he departed Lu, he said, 'Go slow, go slow,' as one should depart one's parents' land. When speed was appropriate he was fast, when delay was appropriate he was slow. Where it was appropriate to dwell apart he dwelt apart, where it was appropriate to serve he served."

5B.1 The three sages compared to Confucius here are all frequent subjects of comment in the *Mencius*. See the **Index of Persons** for details about them. The structure and some of the specifics of this passage are parallel to *Analects* 18.8.

The Confucian doctrine of Timeliness holds that no ethical rule can be absolute, and that the perfected virtue of the sage is the ultimate seat of authoritative judgment in specific action contexts.

Mencius concluded, "Bo Yi was the sage of purity; Yi Yin was the sage of responsibility; Liuxia Hui was the sage of harmony; Confucius was the sage of timeliness. We call Confucius 'the great coda.' By this we mean that he is like the great musical climax, where the brass gongs peal and the jade chimes ring. The peal of the brass gongs signals the start of the culmination and the ring of the jade chimes brings the coda to its close. The start of the culmination is like the work of wisdom; the close of the coda is like the work of sagehood. Wisdom can be compared to craft and sagehood to strength. Like an arrow shot from beyond a hundred paces: that it reaches the target is a matter of strength; that it hits the bullseye is not a matter of strength."

5B.2 Bogong Qi asked, "What system of rank and stipends was employed by the House of Zhou ?"

Mencius said, "The details cannot now be known. The various lords, fearing that they might suffer if the facts were known, destroyed all the records. Nevertheless, I once was able to learn the basic outline. There were five grades of rulers: the Son of Heaven, dukes, marquises, earls, and, sharing a single grade, viscounts and barons. There were six grades within each jurisdiction: the ruler, the ministers, the grandees, and gentlemen of upper, middle, and lower ranks.

"The territory administered directly by the Son of Heaven was one thousand *li* square; dukes and marquises each administered territories five hundred li square; earls administered seventy square *li*, and viscounts and barons fifty square *li*. In this respect there were altogether four grades. A governing ruler whose territory was less than fifty *li* square had no direct access to the Son of Heaven, but was attached to one of the lords and termed a 'dependent.'

"Of the courtiers to the Son of Heaven, a minister received lands comparable to a marquis, a grandee received lands comparable to an earl, and a leading gentleman received lands comparable to a baron.

"A state of at least one hundred *li* square was considered a great state. The income allotted to the ruler was ten times that of the ministers, the ministers four times that of the grandees, the grandees and three grades of gentlemen each double the grade below. Gentlemen of the lowest grade received income equal to that of a commoner appointed to official position, whose stipend was sufficient to replace his income as a farmer.

"The next level of state was seventy *li* square. The income allotted to the ruler was ten times that of the ministers, the ministers three times that of the grandees, the grandees and three grades of gentlemen each double the grade below. Gentlemen of

5B.2 This idealized picture of Western Zhou ranks is likely to have little to do with historical fact: no inscriptional evidence from the period bears out the details, although the terms used to denote ranks of high nobility were employed.

Although, by convention, English equivalents for noble ranks are borrowed from the West European feudal system, the centralized monarchy pictured here, with its bureau-cratized aristocracy, bears almost no resemblance to Western feudalism.

the lowest grade received income equal to that of a commoner appointed to official position, whose stipend was sufficient to replace his income as a farmer.

"In a small state of fifty *li*, the income allotted to the ruler was ten times that of the ministers, the ministers twice that of the grandees, the grandees and three grades of gentlemen each double the grade below. Gentlemen of the lowest grade received income equal to that of a commoner appointed to official position, whose stipend was sufficient to replace his income as a farmer.

"The income from ploughed land was calculated as the harvest of one hundred *mu*. The fertility of land was graded such that a farmer of the highest grade was able to feed nine people, followed by lower grades with land able to feed eight, seven, six, and five people. When a commoner was appointed to official position, his income was graded accordingly."

5B.3 Wan Zhang said, "May I presume to ask about friendship?"

Mencius said, "Between one another, friends do not presume upon the advantage of being the elder, or of higher rank, or of having family connections. To befriend someone is to befriend his virtue, and there cannot be reliance upon advantage.

"Meng Xianzi led a household of one hundred chariots and had five friends: Yuezheng Qiu, Mu Zhong, and I forget the others. Xianzi's friendship with these five had nothing to do with the status of Xianzi's household, and had these five taken Xianzi's status into account he would not have taken them as friends.

"Nor is this merely restricted to families of one hundred chariots: it even applies to some rulers of small states as well. Lord Hui of Bi said, 'I consider Zisi to be my teacher and Yan Ban to be my friend. As for Wang Shun and Chang Xi, they are men in my service.'

"Nor is this merely restricted to the rulers of small states, it even applies to some rulers of large states. The relationship that Duke Ping of Jin had with Hai Tang was such that if Hai Tang said come in, the Duke would come in; if he said sit, the Duke would sit; if he said eat, the Duke would eat. Even if the meal were no more than vegetables and meatless congee the Duke would always eat his full; likely he felt it would be presumptuous not to. But this is as far as it went. The Duke did not share the high office conferred on him by Tian, nor did he share management of his Tian-appointed duties, nor did he share the income Tian granted him. The honor a gentleman grants a worthy man is not the same as the honor granted by a king or duke.

"When Shun appeared in audience before the Emperor, the Emperor granted him a separate residence as his son-in-law, and the two took turns feasting one another as host and guest. This is

5B.3 Meng Xianzi was the senior leader of a powerful warlord family in Lu during the sixth century.

Bi was a region of the state of Lu, where the Confucian Zisi resided.

Duke Ping was a ruler of the sixth century.

Emperor Yao, in elevating Shun from commoner status to heir to the

an example of a Son of Heaven befriending a commoner.

"When a man of lesser rank pays respect to one of higher rank, we call it 'esteeming rank.' When a man of higher rank pays respect to one of lower rank, we call it 'honoring a worthy.' Esteeming rank and honoring worthies are identical in moral principle."

throne, married his two daughters to Shun.

5B.4 Wan Zhang asked, "May I ask about the proper attitude in formal initiatives of social interaction?"

"Respectfulness," said Mencius.

"Why is it said, 'To refuse and refuse again is not respectful?'"

Mencius said, "When a person of high rank sends a gift, to accept it only after thinking, 'Did he obtain this righteously or not?' is not respectful; thus one should not refuse it."

"But if one does not refuse it in so many words, but thinks in one's heart, 'He obtained this from the people unrighteously,' is it not permissible to decline to accept on some pretext?"

"If a relationship were appropriate according to the Dao and the interaction were initiated according to ritual, Confucius would accept such a gift."

Wan Zhang said, "Now suppose the man has ambushed a traveler outside the city gates: if the relationship is appropriate and the gift presented with proper ritual, may one receive the booty?"

"No. The 'Announcement of Kang' says, 'When someone strikes down a man and seizes his goods with no fear of death, no one will fail to condemn him.' Such a man may be executed without any attempt at correction: the Yin accepted this rule from the Xia, and the Zhou accepted it from the Yin without altering a word. Such violence is even more common in our day. How could one accept such a gift?"

"But lords today seize from their people like common assailants. If they ensure that their gifts are given according to ritual, may I ask how you explain whether a *junzi* should accept them?"

"Do you believe that if a True King were to arise he would summarily execute all the lords of our day, or that he would first instruct them and execute only those who would not change? Those who say, 'Anyone who takes anything that does not belong to him is a bandit!' are taking an abstract ideal to the extreme. When Confucius held office in Lu, people contested over the catch after a hunt, so Confucius did the same. If it is permissible even to contest over the catch, how much more so acceptance of a gift?"

"In that case, did Confucius hold office without serving the Dao?"

"He served the Dao."

5B.4 Although framed in the abstract, this question relates to the issue of Mencius's willingness to meet with or receive support from rulers.

The "Announcement of Kang" is a chapter in the *Book of Documents*.

"Contesting the catch" seems to denote a vulgar custom of fighting over the spoils of a hunt at its conclusion, and using the game thus secured for purposes of sacrifice.

"How can one serve the Dao and contest over the catch?"

"Confucius first restored the proper codes governing the use of sacrificial vessels, which clarified that offerings of game from the four quarters was a violation of the codes."

"But why did he not resign and depart the state?"

"He wanted to make an initial demonstration. Once the demonstration had shown what could be accomplished, only after the ruler still declined to act would he depart. This is why he never remained in any position over three years. Confucius took office when he saw the possibility of accomplishment, or when he was invited appropriately, or when worthy men were promoted at court. When he served Ji Huanzi it was with the prospect of accomplishment. When he served Duke Ling of Weì it was in response to being properly invited. When he served Duke Xiao of Weì it was because worthy men were promoted at court."

In prohibiting the use of game caught wild in sacrifice, the point of contesting the catch was lost.

Ji Huanzi was head of the most powerful warlord family in Lu. There is no record of Confucius serving Duke Ling, though he appeared at court. No Duke Xiao is recorded in Weì; the text is likely corrupt here.

5B.5 Mencius said, "The purpose of seeking office is not because one is poor, but there may be times when one does take office for that reason. The purpose of taking a wife is not because one wants to nurture one's parents, but there may be times when one does take a wife for that reason. If you take office because you are poor, decline exalted positions and occupy a humble one; decline any with high salary and occupy one with a small stipend. What sorts of positions would be appropriate? A keeper of the gate or a watchman of the night.

"Confucius once served as a granary manager. All he had to say was, 'The accounts are correct.' He once served as a tender of livestock. All he had to say was, 'The oxen and sheep are well grown.' It is a fault to utter high-sounding words when one's office is humble. It is shameful to stand in the ranks of a ruler's court when the Dao is not practiced."

5B.6 Wan Zhang said, "Why should not a gentleman become a dependent of a lord?"

Mencius said, "It is presumptuous. According to *li*, a ruler who has lost the throne of his state may become a dependent of another lord. But for a gentleman to be a dependent of a lord is contrary to ritual propriety."

Wan Zhang said, "But if a ruler sends him a gift of provisions, should he accept it?"

"Yes, he should accept it."

"On what principle should he accept it?"

"A ruler will surely provide relief to an outsider who comes to dwell as a subject."

"Why can one accept such relief but not a gift?"

"It would be presumptuous."

5B.6 In 2B.10 we see Mencius decline to become a dependent to the King of Qi.

"May I presume to ask why it would be presumptuous?"

Mencius said, "A keeper of the gate and watchman of the night fulfill assigned duties to earn a living from the ruler. To have no assigned duties and accept gifts from a ruler shows a lack of gravity."

"Then if he can accept a gift sent by the ruler, I am unclear whether such gifts can be continued on a regular basis."

"Duke Mu of Lu frequently sent messages of concern for Zisi's welfare, accompanied by meats from the sacrificial cauldrons. Zisi was displeased, and he finally escorted the Duke's envoy out through his gate and, facing to the north, knelt clasping his hands and bowed his head to the ground repeatedly, declining to accept the gift. He said, 'Now I understand that my Lord treats me like livestock to be tended.' It appears that from that time on the Duke's gifts ceased. If one delights in worthy men but can neither raise them to office nor sustain them properly, can one really be said to delight in worthy men?"

On Duke Mu and Zisi, see 2B.11.

Facing north was the position of a subject towards his ruler.

"May I presume to ask, then, just how the ruler of a state should properly sustain a *junzi*?"

"An initial gift is announced as sent upon the order of the ruler, and it should be received kneeling with clasped hands, repeatedly bowing one's head to the ground. After this, a steward should send provisions and a cook should send meat, but without any announcement of the ruler's order. Zisi felt that the sending of meats from the sacrificial cauldrons forced him into constant servile obeisance. This is not the *dao* of sustaining a *junzi*. The way that Yao went about it with Shun was to order his nine sons to serve him, marry his two daughters to him, and commission his officers and those in charge of livestock and granaries to supply Shun as he worked in the fields. Subsequently, he raised Shun to high office. This is what we mean by the honor a king or duke grants worthy men."

5B.7 Wan Zhang said, "May I presume to ask the principle behind your policy of declining to meet with ruling lords?"

5B.7 This same question is asked in 3B.7. The topic is also raised in 3B.1.

Mencius said, "Within the capital city one is called 'a subject of the markets and wells'; in the open lands beyond one is called 'a subject of the grassy wilds.' Both of these refer to commoners, and for a commoner to decline to meet with a lord before having himself conveyed a subject's ritual gift of introduction is a point of ritual."

Wan Zhang said, "When a commoner is summoned to perform corvée labor he goes off to do it. Why, then, when a ruler wishes to meet with a man, and summons him, would he refuse?"

Corveé refers to a tax obligation that is fulfilled through labor, rather than cash or other payment.

"It accords with right to go perform corvée labor, but going to meet with the ruler does not. Moreover, why would the ruler

wish to meet with him?"

"Because he has much learning or is a worthy man."

"If it concerns his having much learning, then even the Son of Heaven does not summon his teacher, much less a common lord. If it concerns his being a worthy man, then I have yet to hear of wishing to meet with a worthy man and summoning him. Duke Mu often went to visit Zisi and once said, 'What about ancient rulers of states of a thousand chariots who befriended gentlemen?' Zisi was displeased and said, 'The ancients had a saying about this, but it concerned paying service to gentlemen, not befriending them.' Was not Zisi's displeasure like saying: 'As to position, you are the ruler and I am the subject: how could I presume to treat my ruler as a friend? But when it comes to virtue, then you are paying service to me: how could you befriend me?' The lord of a thousand chariots could not succeed in befriending him, how much less could he summon him? Once when Duke Jing of Qi was out hunting, he summoned his gamekeeper with a pennant. The keeper did not come and the Duke was ready to put him to death. 'A gentleman of resolve never loses sight of the fact that his corpse may be tossed in a ditch, and a gentleman of valor never loses sight of the fact that he may lose his head.' What lesson did Confucius draw from the gamekeeper? That he would not respond to a summons that was inappropriate for him."

The tale of the gamekeeper appears in 3B.1.

"May I ask how one summons a gamekeeper?"

"With a leather cap. Commoners are summoned with a red flag, gentlemen with a belled flag, and grandees with a pennon. If one summons a gamekeeper with the flag for a grandee he will sooner die than respond. If one summons a commoner with the flag for a gentleman, what commoner will respond? How much less a worthy man summoned as one does an unworthy man. To wish to meet with a worthy man without following the proper *dao* is like wishing him to come in and barring the gate against him. Righteousness is a road and ritual is a gate: only a *junzi* can stay on the road and pass through the gate. The *Poetry* says:

> The Great Way is flat as a grindstone
> And straight as an arrow.
> It is the road the *junzi* walks
> As lesser men only aspire."

Wan Zhang said, "For Confucius, 'When summoned by an order from his ruler, he set off without waiting for the horses to be yoked to the carriage.' Was Confucius wrong?"

The language here duplicates *Analects* 10.6.

"Confucius occupied a court position with official duties. He was summoned according to his office."

5B.8 Mencius said to Wan Zhang, "Within a village, a good

gentleman befriends other good gentlemen in the village; within a state, he befriends other good gentlemen in the state; abroad in the world, he befriends the good gentlemen of the world. If he finds that there are too few of these, he goes back to learn from men of the past. Chant their poems, recite their writings – can one fail to come to know them as men? In this way one makes sense of them in their age. Such friends are the best."

5B.9 King Xuan of Qi asked about ministers. Mencius said, "What type of ministers do you mean?"

The King said, "Are not all ministers alike?"

"No. There are ministers of the ruler's family and ministers of other clans."

"Let me ask about ministers of the ruler's family."

"When the ruler commits a grave error they remonstrate. If he should fail to listen and continue to repeat it, they will depose him."

The King's face grew flushed. Mencius said, "Your Majesty should not be upset. Since Your Majesty asked, I could not dare but answer directly."

Once the King's face grew calm he asked about ministers of other clans.

"When the ruler errs they remonstrate. If he should fail to listen and continue to repeat his error, they will resign."

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BOOK 6
GAOZI
INTRODUCTION

Book 6 is best known for its discussions of human nature, and its exposition of Mencius's signature theory that human nature is innately good. In fact, this topic is confined to Book 6A, and 6B deals with a variety of other matters. The topic of our innate goodness is, however, pervasive in 6A; all but a few of its passages are devoted to this theme.

The book's initial passages, 6A.1-4, portray a debate between Mencius and the philosopher Gaozi on this issue, Gaozi taking the position that humans are, by nature, neither good nor bad. It is not clear what tradition Gaozi belonged to, but in the two other texts that refer to him, he appears to be more a Confucian than anything else, and his doctrine that "humanity is internal," which we first encountered in Mencius 2A.2, would seem to confirm that. The first three passages of the famous debate on human nature are actually not substantively about human nature: they concern the adequacy of metaphors that Gaozi chooses to use in his argument, and the purpose of including these and some other 6A passages in the Mencius was probably as a guide to followers of Mencius's school in how to win debates on the theme of human nature.

The final passage of the debate with Gaozi begins with a substantive claim about human nature by Gaozi, but that theme is immediately dropped and the issue changes to the question of whether our moral dispositions are "internal" or are, instead, determined by external circumstances. This is the topic of 6A.4-5, which broaden in 6A.6 into a restatement of the "four seeds" theory, first encountered in the substantially parallel passage, 2A.6.

Most of the remainder of Book 6A addresses these topics through elaborate metaphors and aphoristic passages, some of which are among the most well crafted and memorable sections of the Mencius.

Book 6B is a very different book. Although it includes some passages of great interest, in both form and content it is one of the most heterogeneous sections of the Mencius. It consists primarily of dialogues with interlocutors on a variety of topics, with short, aphoristic material interspersed towards the close, and defies overall characterization.

BOOK 6
GAOZI
PART A

6A.1 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like the willow tree and righteousness is like cups and bowls. Drawing humanity and right from human nature is like making cups and bowls from willow wood."

Mencius said, "Can you make cups and bowls from willow wood by following its natural grain or is it only after you have hacked the willow wood that you can make a cup or bowl? If you must hack the willow to make cups and bowls from it, must you hack people in order to make them humane and righteous? Your words will surely lead the people of the world to destroy humanity and right."

6A.1 On the term "human nature," see the **Glossary**.

In this and the following passage, Mencius counters Gaozi's arguments from analogy by finding a weakness in the analogy.

6A.2 Gaozi said, "Human nature is like water swirling at a wellspring. If you dig a channel towards the east it will flow east; if you dig a channel towards the west it will flow west. Human nature makes no distinction between good and bad, just as water makes no distinction between east and west."

Mencius said, "It is true that water makes no distinction between east and west, but does it make no distinction between up and down? The good disposition of human nature is like water's tendency to flow down. There are no men who are not innately good, just as there is no water that does not flow down. Now, by splashing you can make water leap up higher than your forehead, and by churning it you can make it flow up a hill, but how could this be the nature of water? It is merely a result of force. The fact that men can be made to act badly merely shows that human nature is like this as well."

6A.3 Gaozi said, "The term 'nature' simply means 'inborn'."

Mencius said, "Do you mean that 'nature' means 'inborn' as 'white' means 'white'?"

"Precisely."

"As the white of white feathers is the white of snow, and the white of snow is the white of white jade?"

"Yes."

"Then the nature of a hound would be the same as the nature of an ox, and the nature of an ox would be the same as a man's?"

6A.3 This passage turns on wordplay. The term for the "nature" of a living thing is *xing* 性, which was cognate in sound and form with the word *sheng* 生, which meant "life, alive, inborn." In Mencius's time, the graph 生 could stand for either word. While Gaozi clearly wishes to make a substantive claim about how the term *xing* should be defined, Mencius reduces this to a lexical analogy to the word "white" (*bai* 白):

生 = 生 :: 白 = 白

Gaozi should have rejected the proposed analogy.

6A.4 Gaozi said, "Appetites for food and sex are part of our nature. Humanity is internal rather than external; right is external

rather than internal."

Mencius said, "Why do you say humanity is internal and right external?"

Gaozi said, "If a man is my elder and I treat him as an elder, there is nothing of the elder about me. It is as if he were white and I treated him as white, I merely follow the external fact of his being white. This is why I treat it as external."

"It is different than the case of white, where one treats a white horse as white in the same sense that one treats a white man as white. Would you say treating an elderly horse as an elder is no different from treating an elderly man as an elder? Moreover, would you say the elder is right or the man who treats the aged as elderly is right?"

Gaozi said, "I love my little brother; I don't love the little brother of some fellow from Qin. In this case, I am the one who experiences the sense of pleasure and so I say this is an 'internal' matter. I treat elders from Chu as elders just as I treat elders from my home town as elders. In this case, I take the elders as the ones I must please, thus I say this is an 'external' matter."

Mencius said, "I like the roast meat served by the man from Qin no differently from my own roast meat, thus one could make the same argument with regard to things. So would you say that my love of roast meat is external?"

6A.5 Meng Jizi asked Gongduzi, "What do you mean by saying that right is internal?"

Gongduzi said, "My acts are guided by my sense of respect, so we say right is internal."

"If a villager happens to be a year older than your elder brother, to whom do you pay higher respect?"

"I respect my brother."

"In serving wine, whom do you serve first?"

"I serve the villager first."

"The one you respect more, but the other you serve as elder, so after all, the matter of right is external; it does not come from within you."

Gongduzi had no answer and reported this to Mencius.

Mencius said, "Ask whether he respects his uncle or his younger brother more; he'll say, 'I respect my uncle.' Say, 'When your younger brother is playing the ritual role of the dead spirit, whom do you respect more?' He'll say, 'I respect my younger brother.' Say, 'Where did your greater respect for your uncle go?' He'll say, 'It is because of the role my brother is playing.' You say too, 'So it is in my case, too – I have abiding respect for my brother, but I momentarily pay respect to the villager.'"

When Jizi encountered this approach he said, "When I pay

6A.4 Gaozi continues to offer flawed analogies by treating "social elder" as equivalent in meaning to "elder," simply because the words are identical, as, again, is the case with "white."

Gaozi's example of love of one's little brother is meant to acknowledge the "internality" of feelings of humane love. He then provides a specific example of the objective "externality" of standards of right. Mencius treats the example as an analogy, and offers a counter-analogy.

6A.5 Meng Jizi may have been a follower of Gaozi; he adopts Gaozi's position here.

Note how, in the examples concerning respect, the issues pertain to ritual, rather than to more abstract principles of right. In the following passage, the "sense of respect" will, in fact, be the basis for the "sense of ritual."

The text's portrait of Mencius coaching his disciple may reflect the role that these passages played in coaching disciple-readers in the art of defending Mencius's philosophy.

respect to my uncle, that is respect; when I pay it to my brother, that is respect. After all, it's external, not internal."

Gongduzi said, "In winter we drink hot water and in summer we drink cold water. Are appetites for food and drink therefore external?"

6A.6 Gongduzi said, "Gaozi says that human nature is neither good nor bad. Others say human nature is such that people can become good or become bad, and that this is why when the sage Kings Wen and Wu arose the people loved to be good, and when the tyrannical Kings You and Li arose people loved to be violent. Still others say there are people whose nature is good and people whose nature is bad, and that is why there could be a bad man like Shun's brother Xiang living under Yao's sagely rule, why Shun could be a sage even though his father was a bad man like Gusou, and why Weizi Qi and Prince Bigan could be outstanding, though Zhòu was their brother's son and their ruler as well. Now you say human nature is good – is everyone else wrong?"

Mencius said, "What I mean by saying it is good is that there is that in our nature which is spontaneously part of us and can become good. The fact that we can become bad is not a defect in our natural endowment. All men possess a sense of commiseration; all men possess a sense of shame; all men possess a sense of respect; all men possess a sense of right and wrong. The sense of commiseration is the seed of humanity; the sense of shame is the seed of righteousness; the sense of respect is the seed of ritual; the sense of right and wrong is the seed of wisdom. Thus humanity, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom are not welded to us from outside. We possess them inherently; it is simply that we do not focus our minds on them. This is the meaning of the saying, 'Seek for it and you will get it; let it go and you will lose it.' The reason why some men are twice as good as others – or five or countless times better – is simply that some men do not exhaust their endowment to the full. The *Poetry* says:

> Tian gave birth to the teeming people,
> For every thing there is a norm.
> The constant for people, within their grasp,
> Is love of beautiful virtue's form.

Confucius said, 'The man who wrote this poem certainly understood the Dao!' Thus for every type of thing there is a norm; that is why the constant that lies within people's grasp is inherently a love of beautiful virtue."

6A.6 Mencius makes a significant point of clarification here, implicitly acknowledging that what he terms the nature (*xing*) concerns an aspect of our innate endowment, rather than the whole of it. Passages that add clarity to this position include 6A.15 and 7B.24. The implication that it is actually environmental factors that determine which aspects of our innate endowment prevail is developed immediately in 6A.7.

6A.7 Mencius said, "In years when the harvests have been good, most young men are compliant; in years when the harvests fail most are vicious. This is not a matter of Tian endowing men

differently; it is whether or not circumstances have entrapped their hearts.

"Take barley for comparison. If you broadcast the grains and rake the soil over them, and if the soil and planting times are comparable for all, they will all shoot up and ripen by the summer solstice. If there are differences it is because of differences in the fertility of the soil, or in the nourishment of rain and dew, or in the labor of the farmer. Thus things that are alike in kind resemble one another in all respects – why would we suspect it to be any different with people?

"The sage and I are of the same kind, and, as Longzi said, 'Even though a man may weave a sandal for a foot he's never seen, I know he won't weave a basket!' Sandals are all more or less alike because all feet in the world are similar.

"The responses of our mouths to flavors are similar in this way. The famous chef Yi Ya was first to grasp what our mouths took pleasure in. If the response of our mouths to flavor differed by nature from those of other people in the way that they do from other kinds, such as dogs and horses, how could it be that everyone in the world follows the recipes of Yi Ya? When it comes to flavor, everyone in the world wishes to cook like Yi Ya because we all have similar tastes. And so it is too with our ears. When it comes to music, everyone in the world wishes to be like Music Master Kuang because we all have similar hearing. And so it is too with our eyes. All the world knows that Zidu is supremely handsome; anyone who doesn't is blind.

"So I say, our mouths all share similar tastes when it comes to flavor, our ears all share similar pleasures in listening when it comes to sound, our eyes all share similar standards of beauty when it comes to looks. How could it be that our hearts alone are different? What quality do we share in our hearts? It is the sense of what is proper and right. The sage is merely the one who was first to grasp what our hearts all took pleasure in. And in this way, what is proper and right pleases my heart in just the way that meats please my mouth."

6A.7 Yi Ya was proverbially a chef of legendary excellence, perhaps based on an actual servant to the court of of Duke Huan of Qi.

Shi (Music Master) Kuang is recorded as a great Music Master during the Spring and Autumn Period.

Zidu was proverbial for good looks, but it is doubtful that such a person was more than legend.

6A.8 Mencius said, "There was once a time when the woods of Ox Mountain were lovely. But because they lay close beside the capital of a great state, the ax and adze hacked away at them – could they remain lovely long? By dawn and evening they were nourished by the rains and the dew, and surely there was no lack of shoots springing up. But then cattle and sheep came to graze, and thus the mountain remains barren. When people observe how it is barren, they assume it could never have been covered with woods, but how could that possibly be the nature of a mountain?

"And could what exists within people possibly be without humanity and righteousness? That a man may have let go of his

6A.8 Ox Mountain (Niushan) was located just outside the capital city of Qi, which was famous for its dense population.

original heart is indeed like taking the ax and adze to the mountain's woods – hacking at them dawn after dawn, how can any beauty remain? Despite the rest such a man may get between night and day, and the restorative *qi* that the morning brings, the things he does day after day destroy these effects, and in time little will he resemble other men in what he likes and hates. When this destruction is repeated, the *qi* he stores up each night will not be enough to preserve what was originally in him, and when the night *qi* can no longer preserve that, then he is not far from a beast. Others see that he has become a beast and they assume he never possessed a human endowment, but how could that possibly be what is intrinsic to the person?

"There is nothing that does not grow when it receives its proper nourishment, and there is nothing that does not shrivel when it loses that which it was nourished by. Confucius said, 'Grasp it and you will preserve it; let it go and it will vanish; when it comes and where it goes, no one knows.' Was it not the heart that he meant?"

On *qi*, see 2A.2 and the **Glossary**.

This is an otherwise unrecorded saying of Confucius. It is echoed in 7A.3.

6A.9 Mencius said, "It is no wonder that the King is unwise. If you take the heartiest plant in the world and expose it to the warm sun for one day and to frigid cold for ten days it will not be able to grow. It is rare indeed that I have audience with the King, and as soon as I have withdrawn, in come the others to freeze him. If I have brought forth any sprouts in him, what comes of it? Think of playing the game of *yi*. It is a minor skill, but if one does not concentrate his mind and exert mental effort it cannot be mastered. Yi Qiu is the best *yi* player in the state; let's say that he teaches two men to play. One man concentrates his mind, exerts mental effort, and listens only to Yi Qiu, while the other, although he listens, thinks a goose is flying towards them and imagines grabbing his bow and arrow to shoot it. Though he has studied alongside the first pupil he will not equal him in skill. Is this is because his intelligence is inferior? No, it is not."

6A.9 The argument here is similar to 3B.6.

The game of *yi* was ancestral to the modern Japanese game of *go*.

6A.10 Mencius said, "I love to eat fish; I also love to eat bear paws. If I can't have both, I will forego the fish and eat the bear paws. I love life; I also love right. If I can't have both, I will forego life and choose to do right. Life is truly something I love, it is just that there is something else I love more, and so I can't hold on to life by devious means. And death is truly something I hate, it is just that there is something I hate more than death, and so there are dangers I will not avoid.

"If a man loves nothing more than life, then won't he use whatever means are required to hold onto it? If a man hates nothing more than death, then won't he use whatever means are

required to avoid danger? Yet there are things men won't do in order to avoid danger and live, and from this we know that there are things men love more than life and hate more than death. It is not just worthy men who have such feelings, all men have them; worthies are simply those who do not lose them.

"Let's say that a dishful of rice and a bowlful of porridge are the difference between life and death. If you offer them with a curse, no traveler would accept them, and if you trampled on them first, even a beggar would refuse. But when it comes to accepting a court stipend of ten thousand measures of grain, people accept it with no question of ritual and right. What will such a stipend provide for me? A beautiful home, the attentions of a wife and concubines, the gratitude of needy acquaintances whose pleas I heed? A moment ago, I refused rice and porridge that meant life or death because it was not proper to accept, but now I'll do anything for a beautiful home, the attentions of a wife and concubines, or the gratitude of needy acquaintances whose pleas I heed. Is there no end to what I would do? This is called losing one's original heart."

6A.11 Mencius said, "Humanity is the heart of man, and right is man's path. How woeful it is when a man turns from his road and does not follow it, and lets his heart go without realizing he needs to find it. When people let their chickens and dogs roam away they know to go find them, but when their heart has wandered off it is different. The *dao* of learning is none other than this: it is a search for one's lost heart."

6A.12 Mencius said, "Let's say that the fourth finger of your hand were bent crooked so that you could not straighten it, but that it neither hurt not interfered with your normal activities. If there were someone who could straighten your finger: even if you had to go all the way to Qin or Chu to see him you would not think it too far. This is because of your finger not being as good as other people's. When our fingers are not as good as others' we detest it, but when our hearts are not as good as others' we don't realize we should detest it. This is called not knowing priorities."

6A.13 Mencius said, "When it comes to a parasol or catalpa tree a mere handspan in thickness, if we wish it to thrive we know how to nurture it. But when it comes to our own persons we don't know to nurture them. How could it be that we love our own persons less than these trees? How utterly thoughtless!"

6A.14 Mencius said, "People love all parts of their bodies, and they nurture them all together. There's not an inch of a person's skin he does not love, nor an inch he does not nurture. When

considering the different value of the parts of the body, there is no standard other than to consider their relation to the person himself. The body has parts that are of different value, and greater and lesser parts. One should not harm a greater part for the sake of a smaller, or a more valuable part for the sake of one of lesser worth. Those who nurture the smaller parts become small men; those who nurture the greater parts become great men.

"Let's say a gardener cut down fine phoenix and catalpa trees and nurtured thorn trees and brambles; we'd say he was a worthless gardener. A man who nurtured his finger while allowing his shoulder and back to degenerate without being aware of it would be called deranged. Those who care only about food and drink are despised because they nurture the small and lose the large. But if a man who cares for food and drink does not lose what is large, then how is his mouth and belly then simply a small patch of flesh?"

6A.14 Those who argued that human nature included bad features equated it with the mouth and belly – our appetites. Here Mencius assesses the value of the appetites in terms of their service to innately moral dispositions.

6A.15 Gongduzi asked, "We are all equally men, yet some are great men and others small men. Why is this?"

Mencius said, "Those who follow their greater body become great men, those who follow their lesser body become small men."

"We are all equally men, why do some follow their greater bodies while others follow their smaller?"

Mencius said, "The ears and eyes are organs that do not think; their perception is veiled by things. In this way, one thing encountering another, there is simply a force of attraction. The mind is an organ that thinks. If you think you'll grasp, if you don't you won't. This is a potential endowed in us by Tian. Once a man chooses to stand by his greater parts, his lesser parts cannot seize him. Being a great man is no more than this."

6A.15 On the notion of human nature as bifurcated into greater and lesser aspects, see the initial portion of 6A.6 and 7B.24.

6A.16 Mencius said, "There are offices that are bestowed by Tian and offices that are bestowed by men. Humanity, righteousness, loyalty, faithfulness, the untiring love of goodness – these are offices bestowed by Tian. Duke, minister, grandee – these are offices bestowed by men. Men of old cultivated their Tian-bestowed offices, and human offices followed. Men today cultivate their Tian-bestowed offices in order to exact from other men an office, and once they have it, they cast away their Tian-bestowed offices. There are no men more deluded than these. In the end, they will surely perish."

6A.17 Mencius said, "The desire for noble rank is something all men share in their hearts. But every person possesses nobility within themselves, they simply don't realize it. What they treat as noble is not our innate nobility. But what Zhao Meng takes to be

6A.17 Zhao Meng was a

noble, Zhao Meng can also treat as base. The *Poetry* says:

We are drunk from his wine,
We are full with his virtue.

This speaks of being so satiated with humanity and righteousness that one feels no desire for the flavor of others' fat meats and fine grain. When a fine reputation and broad fame adorn one's person, one feels no desire for others' fine brocade."

6A.18 Mencius said, "Humanity conquers inhumanity as water extinguishes fire. But today, those who practice humanity are like a cup of water attempting to extinguish a cartload of burning kindling. When the fire burns, to say that water does not extinguish fire is no different from extreme inhumanity: in the end it too will inevitably lead to death."

6A.19 Mencius said, "The Five Grains are the finest of crops, but if they do not ripen they are not as good as coarse wild grains. Likewise with humanity: everything depends on its ripening."

6A.20 Mencius said, "Yi's instruction for archery was always to be sure to draw one's bow to the full. Those who study his art must likewise be sure to draw their bows to the full. When a master carpenter instructs someone, he always uses the compass and T-square. Those who study must likewise follow rules."

b b b

powerful lord of the Spring and Autumn era state of Jin. Here, his name is used proverbially.

6A.19 The Five Grains conventionally names the most prized cereal crops.

6A.20 Yi was a legendary master of archery.

The phrase, "compass and T-square," when used as a single term, is a noun meaning "rules."

BOOK 6
GAOZI
PART B

6B.1 A man from Ren asked Wuluzi, "Which is more important, ritual or food?"

"Ritual is more important," said Wuluzi.

"Which is more important, sex or ritual?"

"Ritual is more important."

"What if you would starve to death if you insisted on ritual, but you could get food if you didn't. Would you still have to abide by ritual? What if by skipping the ritual groom's visit to receive the bride you could take a wife, but otherwise you could not? Would you still insist on the groom's ritual visit?"

Wuluzi was unable to reply, and the next day he went to Zou to consult with Mencius.

Mencius said, "What's difficult about this? And inch long wood chip could measure higher than a building if we hold its tip up above and ignore the difference in what is below. When we say that gold is heavier than feathers, we don't mean a buckle's worth of gold and a cartload of feathers! If you compare the extremity of need for food with a minor ritual, it's not just food that can seem more weighty. If you compare the extremity of need for joining of the sexes with a minor ritual, it's not just sex that can seem more weighty.

"Go back and respond to him like this: 'What if you could get food you need only by twisting your elder brother's arm – would you twist it? What if you could get a wife only by climbing over your neighbor's east wall and dragging his daughter off – would you do it?'"

6B.1 This passage echoes 4A.17 in content and 6A.5 in form.

Wuluzi was a disciple of Mencius. The small state of Ren was in Shandong, not far from Mencius's home state of Zou.

In 4A.17, Mencius calls this type of reasoning "balancing," using a term that denotes the steelyard scale. Here the same idea is concretely imagined.

6B.2 Cao Jiao asked, "Is it true that every man can become a Yao or Shun?"

"It is," said Mencius.

"I have heard that King Wen was ten *chi* tall, while Tang was nine *chi* tall. Now I am nine feet four *cun* tall, and I already eat all I can. What should I do?"

"What has height to do with anything? What you need is simply to act. If there were a man who said he did not have the strength to lift a baby duckling, he would be acting as a weak man does. Now, if he says he can lift a weight of one hundred *jun*, he would be acting as a strong man does. If it turns out he can lift what Wu Huo can lift, he is simply a Wu Huo. How could inability have been the problem? He was simply not doing what he could do. A man who walks slowly to trail his older brother behaves as a younger brother should, while one who walks quickly to precede

6B.2 Cao Jiao was the brother of the ruler of the small state of Cao.

Chi and *cun* were shorter than, but comparable to, feet and inches. Cao Jiao is being sarcastic.

One hundred *jun* would be over one thousand pounds.

Wu Huo was proverbial for strength.

his older brother behaves as a younger brother should not. How could walking slow be something he is unable to do? It's just that he doesn't do it. The Dao of Yao and Shun is simply to be a filial son and a good younger brother. If you wear the clothes of Yao, chant the words of Yao, and act the acts of Yao, you are simply Yao. If you wear the clothes of Jie, chant the words of Jie, and act the acts of Jie, you are simply Jie."

Cao Jiao said, "If I were granted an audience with the ruler of Zou and allotted a residence, I would like to remain here and receive instruction at your gate."

"The Dao is a broad road: how could it be difficult to recognize? People fall short simply because they do not look for it. Go home and seek it out, Sir. There will be more than enough teachers for you."

Jie was the wicked last ruler of the Xia Dynasty.

Apparently, this conversation took place in Zou, Mencius's native state.

6B.3 Gongsun Chou said, "Gāozi called 'Small Fluttering' the ode of a petty man."

Mencius said, "Why did he say so?"

"It is peevish."

"How narrow Aged Gāo's understanding of the poem is! Suppose you have a man whom someone has tried to shoot with an arrow. If the archer was some person from Yue, the man may talk about the incident light heartedly, simply because he was a stranger. But if it was his brother who shot at him, he will talk about it with tears streaming down his face, simply because his attacker was close family. The complaint of 'Small Fluttering' concerns love for one's parents, and that is a matter of humane feelings. Aged Gāo's understanding of the poem is very narrow."

"But why is there no peevishness in 'Warm Wind?'"

"The faults of the family in 'Warm Wind' are minor, while the faults of the parents in 'Small Fluttering' are great. To fail to grieve when one's family commits great errors is to hold them at a distance; to grieve over their minor errors is petulant. Holding them at a distance is unfilial, and so is petulance. Confucius said, 'Shun was perfectly filial: at fifty he still yearned for his parents' love.'"

6B.3 The identity of this Gāozi, called "Aged Gāo" is uncertain, but he is not the Gaozi of the 6A debates.

"Small Fluttering" is the title of an ode in the *Book of Poetry*. Mencius seems to read the poem as the complaint of a disenfranchised heir to the throne.

"Warm Wind" is another ode from the *Poetry*, traditionally read as a reproach of sons not adequately caring for their mother.

6B.4 Song Keng was on his way to Chu. Mencius encountered him at Shiqiu and asked, "Where are you going, Sir?"

Song Keng said, "I have been told that the armies of Qin and Chu have gone to war, and I shall visit the King of Chu and persuade him to call it off. If the King of Chu does not appreciate my argument, I will visit the King of Qin and persuade him likewise. Between the two I shall surely encounter success."

"I shall not presume to ask in detail, but I would like to hear the main gist of your argument."

6B.4 Song Keng was a well known thinker and persuader, contemporary with Mencius. His best known doctrines concern the morality of reducing desires, indifference to humiliation, and non-violence, the last of which resembled Mohist pacifism. He is presented

Song Keng said, "I will explain that there is no profit in it."

Mencius said, "Your intentions are certainly lofty, but your formula is unacceptable. If you persuade these kings on the grounds of profit and they call off their armies on the grounds of profit, all the men in the armies, pleased with war's end, will favor profit. If subjects cherish profit in service to their masters, if sons cherish profit in service to their fathers, if juniors cherish profit in service to their seniors, then the relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger will ultimately be drained of humanity and right, all engaging one another solely through a love of profit. Never has the ruler of such a state survived.

"Sir, you should persuade these kings by arguments of humanity and right, for if they call off their armies on the grounds of humanity and right, then all the men in the armies, pleased with war's end, will favor humanity and right. If subjects cherish humanity and right in service to their masters, if sons cherish humanity and right in service to their fathers, if juniors cherish humanity and right in service to their seniors, then the relationships between ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger will ultimately be drained of profit seeking, all engaging one another solely through a love of humanity and right. Never has the ruler of such a state failed to rule as a True King. Why must you speak of profit?"

here as a Mohist, setting off in an effort to prevent aggressive war.

Mencius's arguments here echo those in 1A.1.

6B.5 When Mencius dwelt in Zou, Ji Ren was presiding over Ren and sent a gift of introduction to Mencius. Mencius accepted it, but made no response. When Mencius dwelt in Pinglu, Chuzi was serving as prime minister of Qi and sent a gift of introduction to Mencius.[2] Mencius accepted it, but again made no response. Later, Mencius traveled from Zou to Ren and visited Jizi. But when he later traveled from Pinglu to Qi he did not visit Chuzi.

Wuluzi was delighted. "I have detected an inconsistency!" he said. He posed a question to Mencius: "When you went to Ren you visited Jizi. However, when you went to Qi you did not visit Chuzi; was this because he was prime minister?"

"It was not," said Mencius. "The *Documents* says, 'A gift is mostly in the manner of its giving. If the manner falls short of the gift it is as if no gift has been given, because no care has been given to the gift.' My action was because it did not constitute a gift."

Wuluzi was pleased. When someone asked him about this, he said, "Jizi could not go to Zou, but Chuzi could have gone to Pinglu."

6B.5 This passage may be viewed as a concrete illustration of issues discussed generally in 5B.4.

Ji Ren (Jizi) was the younger brother of the ruler of Ren, a small state just to the west of Zou in Shandong. It is unclear why he was presiding over Ren at this time.

Pinglu was a town near the edge of Qi territory. It is actually much farther from the Qi capital than Ren was from Zou, so distance was not the issue here. It may be that Ji Ren could not leave the state he was presiding over.

6B.6 Chunyu Kun said, "One who places priority on his accomplishments bearing out his reputation does so for the sake of

6B.6 Chunyu Kun was a courtier in Qi, and this

others; one who takes matching his reputation with accomplishments to be secondary acts for his own benefit. You, Sir, were numbered among the three ranks of great ministers, but, accomplishments matching your fame having yet to benefit either the ruler above you or the people below, you resigned. Would a man of humanity truly have acted in this way?"

Mencius said, "Occupying a low position, he would not employ his worthiness in the service of unworthy men: such was Bo Yi. Five times repairing to Tang and five times to Jie: such was Yi Yin. Neither scorning a tarnished ruler nor declining minor posts: such was Liuxia Hui. Although these three followed different *dao*s their objectives were identical. What was their objective? Humanity. For a *junzi* there is only humanity; why must they all act uniformly?"

Chunyu Kun asked, "In the time of Duke Mu of Lu, Gongyizi was prime minister, while Ziliu and Zisi were subjects. Yet the territory of Lu was severely reduced. Are worthy men thus of no benefit to a state?"

"The state of Yu employed Boli Xi and perished; Duke Mu of Qin employed him and became hegemon. If one does not employ worthy men one's state will perish; how could one hope for no worse than a reduction in territory?"

Chunyu Kun said, "In past times, Wang Bao dwelt on the River Qi and people in that region west of the Yellow River became skilled in ballads, while Mian Ju dwelt in Gaotang and the people of western Qi became skilled in song. The wives of Hua Zhou and Qi Liang wailed for their husbands so well that they altered the customs of the state. When one possesses something within it will always be expressed without. I have never seen anyone truly undertake a task and achieve nothing at all. So there cannot be any worthy men today. If there were, I would surely be aware of them."

Mencius replied, "Confucius was the Minister of Crime in Lu, and his counsel was ignored. Having participated in a state sacrificial rite, when the gift of roast meats due him did not arrive, he departed the state without taking off his ceremonial cap. Those without understanding believed it was because of the meat, but those who understood knew it was because ritual had been violated. Confucius was willing to depart because of a minor offense because he did not wish to depart in an irregular manner. Why a *junzi* acts as he does is truly beyond the understanding of the mass of men."

6B.7 Mencius said, "The Five Hegemons transgressed against the Three Kings. Today's lords transgress against the Five Hegemons. Today's grandees transgress against the lords.

may record an interview as Mencius was departing that state.

On these three sages, see 5B.1.

Gongyizi is described in Confucian terms in other texts. Ziliu is Xie Liu (see 2B.11, where he is linked to Zisi).

On Boli Xi, see 5A.9.

The two singers here appear to be proverbial, but the tale of the two wives wailing for their warrior husbands concerns a specific historical incident.

This account of Confucius's departure from Lu may be compared with that in 5B.4.

6B.7 The Three Kings are the founders of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou

"When the Son of Heaven visited the lords it was called 'a hunt round his preserve,' and when the lords appeared at the court of the Son of Heaven it was called 'making an official account.' In the spring the Son of Heaven surveyed the ploughing and supplied whatever means were wanting; in fall he oversaw the harvest, and sent supplies wherever yield was insufficient. If upon entering a state's borders he found the land reclaimed for farming and the fields and wild lands well ordered, the old sustained, the worthy esteemed, and able men in office, then he would reward the lord with additional lands. If upon entering the state's borders he found the fields overgrown, the old abandoned, the worthy gone, and the corrupt in office, then he would mete out a reprimand. If a lord failed to appear at court, he would reduce his rank for an initial offense and reduce his territory for a second. Upon a third offense he would send his armies. For this reason a Son of Heaven is said to 'exact retribution,' not to 'attack,' while the armies of a lord 'attack'; they do not 'seek retribution.' The Five Hegemons coerced some lords into attacking others, and that is why I say they transgressed against the Three Kings.

"Among the Five Hegemons, Duke Huan was the most glorious. At the convocation of lords at Kuiqiu, he bound the sacrificial beast and placed the articles of the covenant upon it, but required no taking of blood oaths. The initial article read: 'Punish unfilial sons; do not remove a designated heir; do not elevate a concubine to the status of a wife.' The second article read: 'Honor worthy men and nurture the talented, so as to make the virtuous manifest.' The third article read: 'Be respectful of the old and kind to the young; do not forget guests in your land.' The fourth article read: 'Gentlemen should not succeed to office by heredity; one man should not hold multiple offices; promote only gentlemen fit for the task; do not execute a grandee by your sole judgment.' The fifth article read: 'Do not dam all rivers; do not cut off grain exports; allocate no demesne without reporting it.' The Duke said, 'All who covenant with us, once the covenant is agreed upon, are returned to our good graces.' The lords of today all violate these five prohibitions, and that is why I say they have transgressed against the Five Hegemons.

"Those who allow their rulers' errors to grow by not opposing them commit a lesser offense, while those who encourage their rulers to err commit a greater offense. Today's grandees all encourage their rulers to err, and that is why I say the grandees transgress against the lords."

6B.8 The state of Lu wished to appoint Shenzi as its general-in-chief. Mencius said, "To put men into battle without instruction is to inflict catastrophe on them, and a man who would do such a

Dynasties. The Five Hegemons were the most powerful lords during the Spring & Autumn period of disunity; they were able to form coalitions of states to maintain the political order sustaining their power, but unable to reunify the fractured Zhou empire.

The convocation at Kuiqiu took place in 650.

Blood oaths marked a lack of mutual trust by invoking the retribution of the spirits against violators.

Concubines were consorts who lacked the status of wives, and whose sons had no claim as heirs of their fathers.

"Gentlemen" (*shi*) was a term denoting those who earned social position by merit, rather than birth. The provision here would have had the effect of keeping the ranks of the aristocracy closed.

The overuse of dams denied water resources to states downstream.

thing would not be tolerated in the days of Yao or Shun. Even if one could, in a single battle, defeat Qi and seize Nanyang, it would still not be permissible."

Shenzi flushed with displeasure and said, "I know nothing of any such thing."

Mencius said, "I will explain it to you clearly. The territory of a Son of Heaven is one thousand *li* square. If it were less, it would not be adequate to sustain the lords. The territory of a lord is one hundred *li* square. If it were less, it would not be adequate to sustain the registers of the ancestral temples. The size of the Duke of Zhou's demesne of Lu was one hundred *li* square. It was not that land was scarce, but that the constraint to one hundred *li* was maintained. The size of Tai Gong's demesne of Qi was also one hundred *li* square. It was not that land was scarce, but that the constraint to one hundred *li* was maintained. Today, the territory of Lu is five times one hundred *li* square. If a True King were to arise, do you think he would enlarge the size of Lu or diminish it? To merely take territory from one state to give to another is something that a humane man would not do, much less if seeking to do so involved killing people. The way a *junzi* serves a ruler is by drawing him towards the Dao and setting his mind upon humanity and nothing else."

6B.8 The specifics of this account are somewhat inconsistent with the account in 5B.2.

6B.9 Mencius said, "Those who serve rulers today say, 'I can open new lands for my lord and fill the treasuries.' What we call an excellent subject today was what used to be called a thief of the people. If a ruler does not face towards the Dao and set his mind upon humanity, to seek to enrich him is to enrich Jie. They say, 'I can form new alliances on behalf of my lord, so that victory in war is inevitable.' What we call an excellent subject today was what used to be called a thief of the people. If a ruler does not face towards the Dao and set his mind upon humanity, to wage warfare on his behalf is to assist Jie. If one follows the 'Dao' of today and makes no change in the customs of the age, though you present your lord with the entire world, he would not dwell on his throne for a single morning."

6B.10 Bo Gui said, "I would like to reduce the rate of taxation to one part in twenty. How would that be?"

Mencius said, "The *dao* that you would follow by doing this would be that of the Mo people. In a state of ten thousand households, how would it be if there were only one potter?"

"That would not work. There would be too few utensils."

"In the land of the Mo, the five grains do not grow, all that grows is millet. They have no walled towns or household compounds, no ancestral temples or rituals of sacrifice, no

6B.10 Bo Gui was the prime minister of the state of Wei. This passage may purport to be a record from early in Mencius's career as a persuader.

The Mo were a non-Chinese tribe of the north. While elsewhere

diplomatic encounters with exchanges of gifts and banquets, and they lack the many offices of state and ceremony. This is why they are able to tax at a rate of one part in twenty. Now if the central states were in this way to discard the relationships among people and the offices of ruler and subject, would that be acceptable? It is impossible to maintain a state if even potters are insufficient in number – how much more so with gentlemen in authority?

"Those who wish to tax at rates lighter than set by the Dao of Yao and Shun are simply greater or lesser barbarians like the Mo. Those who wish to tax at rates heavier than set by the Dao of Yao and Shun are simply greater or lesser tyrants like Jie."

Mencius advocates against high tax rates as oppressive, here he argues against rates so low that the state cannot prevent a return to barbarism.

6B.11 Bo Gui said, "I control flood water better than Yu."

Mencius said, "You are mistaken, Sir. Yu controlled the rivers by means of their natural courses, and in this way, he drained them into the sea. You, Sir, drain them into your neighboring states. When rivers flow against the currents of their natural courses we call it a deluge, which is to say, a flood. It is something a humane man abhors. You are mistaken, Sir."

6B.12 Mencius said, "If a *junzi* were not faithful, how could he maintain his integrity?"

6B.12 The term rendered "integrity" is a different one from that in 4A.12.

6B.13 The state of Lu planned to appoint Yuezhengzi as prime minister. Mencius said, "When I heard about it I was so happy I could not sleep."

Gongsun Chou said, "Is Yuezhengzi resolute?"

"No."

"Does he have the insight of wisdom?"

"No."

"Does he have much knowledge and learning?"

"No."

"Then why were you so happy you could not sleep?"

"Because it is in his character to love the good."

"Is love of the good enough?"

Mencius said, "Loving the good is more than enough to govern the world, and how much beyond that to govern Lu! If one truly loved the good, people from all the four quarters would regard a thousand *li* journey as trivial in order to come speak to him of the good. But if he does not truly love the good, then he will say to them, 'Hmm. I am already well aware of it.' The sound of that 'Hmm' and the expression on his face will drive men away a thousand *li*. When gentlemen keep a thousand *li* distance, it will be slandering toadies and flatterers who come. If one joins with slandering toadies and flatterers to put a state in order, is it possible to succeed?"

6B.13 Yuezhengzi was a courtier associated with Mencius. In 4A.24-25, Mencius treats him like a student. However, his relationship with Mencius may have been based more on familial ties than on discipleship. See the **Index of Persons** for details.

Nothing further is heard in the *Mencius* about Yuezhengzi's prospective appointment.

6B.14 Chenzi said, "Under what conditions would a *junzi* of old agree to serve at court?"

Mencius said, "There were three conditions under which he would serve, and three conditions under which he would depart. If a ruler received him with expressions of great respect in adherence to ritual, and indicated in his words that he was prepared to put his counsel into practice, then he would agree to serve. If the ruler received him with ritual that was not perfunctory, but by his words indicated no intent to implement his counsel, he would depart. At a lesser level, if a ruler, although not yet agreeing to implement his counsel, received him with expressions of great respect in adherence to ritual, then he would agree to serve. But if he was received with perfunctory ritual he would depart. At the lowest level, if he had nothing to eat, morning and night, so weak he could not leave his gate, and the ruler, hearing of this, said, 'I was not able to practice his *dao* nor to follow his counsel, but I would be ashamed if he starved to death in my land,' then if the ruler approached him with kind support he would accept it. But this would simply be to avoid death."

6B.15 Mencius said, "Shun emerged from amidst the fields. Fu Yue was raised up from a prison labor gang. Jiao Ge was raised up from the fish ponds. Guan Yiwu was raised up as a jailed captive. Sunshu Ao was raised up from the seacoast. Boli Xi was raised up from the market place.

"Thus it is that when Tian means to place a great burden of responsibility upon a man, it always first steeps the aspirations of his heart in bitterness and labors his muscle and bone. Starving his frame and flesh, depleting his person, obstructing his every plan: these are means to motivate his heart, strengthen his endurance, and expand what he is capable of doing. Only after persisting in error can a man correct himself; only after his mind is pressed and his thoughts thwarted can he create a new way; only when his face is flushed with expression and sound busts from his mouth is he understood. When within a state there are neither families that set standards nor gentleman who offer admonishments, and abroad there are no enemies and external threats, that state will generally perish. Knowing this one realizes that we thrive in adversity and perish from comfort and pleasure."

6B.15 Fu Yue was chief minister to the strong mid-Shang King Wuding. Jiao Ge was a worthy man who fruitlessly served the wicked last king of the Shang. Guan Yiwu is Guan Zhong, minister to the first hegemon, Duke Huan of Qi. Sunshu Ao was a famous prime minister of the state of Chu. Boli Xi was a prime minister in Qin (see 5A.9).

6B.16 Mencius said, "Instruction makes use of many techniques. When I do not deign to instruct someone, that too is a form of instruction."

6B.16 A relevant example may appear in 6B.2.

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BOOK 7
EXHAUSTING THE MIND
INTRODUCTION

The final book of the Mencius is largely composed of aphorisms uttered by Mencius without the presence of an interlocutor. Most of these aphorisms are short: although it is only one of seven books of roughly equal length, Book 7 includes almost one-third of the distinct passages in the entire Mencius, a product of the brevity of the individual entries.

Although there are some clusters of related aphorisms, there is no clear principle of organization to the book. Nevertheless, Book 7 includes some of the most influential passages in the Mencius, and it does break new ground.

In an initial string of passages, 7A.1-3, the Mencius offers an approach to the tension between alternative concepts that political outcomes are governed by divine plan or by human agency. This was a major issue for Confucians, who wished to claim the support of Tian for the Dao they advocated for both sage personal self-cultivation and the reunification of civilization under sage rule, but who had for two centuries confronted the fact that Tian's supposed advocacy had not been translated into the slightest tangible progress, at least towards Confucian political goals. While men like Mencius could testify to the effectiveness of the Confucian program to engender virtue in them and in others, effort on their part had been ineffective in translating this into political change. They thus faced the familiar issue of theodicy: Why does an all-powerful deity, Tian, allow injustice, and how should a person respond? For Mencius, the answer to these questions seems best supplied by passages such as 2B.13, and 6B.15: Tian has a long-term plan that will bring an ideal world into being over time, and those who will play a part in Tian's plan must endure hardships that will prepare them for effective action when the time comes. This teleological explanation, which views all individual outcomes as understandable only in terms of the divine goal of an overarching plan, subordinates human goals to divine ones, and explains why those who act virtuously may not be rewarded by the fulfillment of their immediate goals. The opening of Book 7 appeals to these ideas through the concept of "ming," which can mean "fate" or "destiny," depending whether it denotes an outcome that is bad or good, in the past or in the future.

Apart from the brief thematic unity among its opening passages, however, Book 7 has no dominant themes, and until its closing passage, it resembles a miscellany of teachings that were collected as a residue from the more focused books that precede it. There is no doubt, however, that its closing entry, 7B.38, is placed at the end for a reason. It signals in no uncertain terms both the end and the failure of the political mission that most urgently animates the first two books of the text. It is surely the most forlorn coda of any text in the early Chinese philosophical corpus.

BOOK 7
EXHAUSTING THE MIND
PART A

7A.1 Mencius said, "He who exhausts his mind knows his nature; to know one's nature is to know Tian. The way to serve Tian is to preserve the mind and nourish the nature. The way to stand waiting for Tian's commands (*ming*) is this: never waver for fear of death, just cultivate your person and await them."

7A.1 The term *ming* covers a variety of meanings, including "command" or "decree," and "fate" or "destiny." It is a key term in this and other passages in Book 7. See the **Glossary** for details.

7A.2 Mencius said, "Everything is decreed (*ming*): obey by receiving those commands proper to you. Thus, those who know their commands do not stand beneath high walls. A man's proper command is to follow the Dao to the end and die. To die in shackles cannot be a man's proper command."

7A.3 Mencius said, "'Strive for it and get it; let it go and lose it': in this saying, striving helps to get it, because what I strive for lies within me. 'There is a way to strive for it; getting it lies with fate (*ming*)': here striving does not help to get it, because what I strive for lies outside of me."

7A.3 Whether Mencius is citing a text or a proverbial saying is not clear.

7A.4 Mencius said, "The world of things is complete in me; to reflect upon oneself and find perfect integrity: there is no joy greater than this! To strive to act with reciprocity, there is no closer approach to humanity."

7A.4 The term "reciprocity" (*shu*) is a key Confucian term, used nowhere else in the Mencius. Its meaning is explained by a formula resembling the Golden Rule, "What you yourself would not desire do not do to others" (*Analects* 15.24).

7A.5 Mencius said, "There are many who act without understanding why, follow habit without realizing it, and follow along their entire lives without being aware of what *dao* they are following."

7A.6 Mencius said, "A person must not be shameless; the shame of being shameless is true shamelessness."

7A.7 Mencius said, "Shame is of critical importance to people; those who make their way through clever trickery, however, have no use for it. If one does not feel ashamed of being inferior to others, how will one ever become as good as they?"

7A.8 Mencius said, "The wise kings of old so loved good men they would forget all matters of social position. How could it be different for worthy gentlemen of old? They so delighted in the Dao that they would forget the high position of others. That is why kings and dukes who did not treat those gentlemen with utter

respect in full accordance with ritual were unable to meet with them many times. Unable even to meet with them many times, how could they recruit them to office?"

7A.9 Mencius addressed Song Goujian, saying, "Do you like to wander to courts to offer counsel? I will teach you the way to do it. When a ruler recognizes your worth, feel untroubled; when a ruler fails to recognize your worth, feel untroubled."

"How does one go about feeling untroubled?"

"Honor virtue and delight in right and you will be untroubled. This why a gentleman does not deviate from right when paths of appointment are closed to him, and why he does not stray from the Dao when he is accepted at court. Because he does not deviate from right when paths of appointment are closed to him, a gentleman maintains his character; because he does not stray from the Dao when he is accepted at court, people do not stop looking to him with hope. When the men of old realized their aspirations, the benefits spread to the people; when their aspirations went unrealized, their example of self-cultivation was visible to the world. When paths of appointment were closed, they bettered themselves alone; when accepted at court, they bettered all in the world."

7A.9 Although Song Goujian's identity is unknown, he was clearly a wandering persuader, like Mencius.

7A.10 Mencius said, "Those who await the coming of a King Wen to apply their energies are ordinary people. Gentlemen of outstanding mettle apply their energies even when there is no King Wen."

7A.10 Based on 2A.1, 2B.14, and 7B.38, here Mencius may be providing self-justification for his mission.

7A.11 Mencius said, "If a man were provided the wealth of the Han and Wei families and still viewed himself lacking in character, he would surpass other men by far."

7A.11 These two families were great powers in the Spring and Autumn period state of Jin; here they are cited proverbially.

7A.12 Mencius said, "If a government directs people through policies that will ease their lives, though some labor hard they will bear no grudge. If a government kills people through policies that will promote life, though some must die, they will bear no grudge against those who bring about their deaths."

7A.13 Mencius said, "The people ruled by a hegemon are content; the people ruled by a True King are self-assured. If put to death they bear no grudge, when receiving benefits they give no thanks. Every day they move towards the good and are unaware who leads them there.

"Wherever the *junzi* passes he transforms, and where he dwells it is as though the spirits prevail. His workings join together with Tian above and earth below. How could one speak of this as

7A.13 The phrase, "as though the spirits prevail" translates a single term (*shen* 神) which means

some minor benefit?"

7A.14 Mencius said, "Humane words do not penetrate people as deeply as the sounds of humane music, and good governance does not captivate the people as readily as good teachings. Good governance is held in awe by the people; good teachings are beloved. Good governance will control the wealth of the people; good teachings will gain their hearts."

7A.15 Mencius said, "Those things that people can do without studying comprise their inherent abilities, and that which they know without reflection is known inherently. No toddler does not know to love his parents, and when they grow older, none does not know to respect his elders. Love of parents is humanity; respect for elders is right. All that need be done is to extend them throughout the world."

7A.16 Mencius said, "When Shun was still deep in the mountains, dwelling among the trees and rocks, roaming alongside the deer and boars, what distinguished him from the primitive men of the mountains was so very small. When he heard a phrase or saw an act that was good, it was like a river dam suddenly unblocked, when the water bursts through and nothing can stop it."

7A.17 Mencius said, "Don't do what others will not do; don't wish for what others do not wish for. That's all there is to it."

7A.18 Mencius said, "Those who possess virtue, intelligence, skill, and understanding often do so as a consequence of adversity. Officers out of favor and sons of concubines – with a sense of danger such men keep tight control over their hearts, and they are keen in their anticipation of trouble in advance. Hence they often succeed."

7A.19 Mencius said, "There are men who are courtiers: when they serve a particular lord their goal is to please him. There are servants of the state: their pleasure lies in ensuring the security of the altars of state. There are the people of Tian: only after they have attained a position to influence the world do they act. There are great men: they set themselves aright and everything is righted."

7A.20 Mencius said, "The *junzi* takes joy in three things, and ruling as king of the world is not among them. That his father and mother both are alive and his brothers without troubles: that is the first joy. That he can look up and not feel ashamed before Tian, and look down and not feel remorse towards men: that is the

"spirit-like": accomplished as though by invisible spirit force, without visible human agency.

7A.15 The descriptions of innate humanity and right in this passage may be contrasted with those in 2A.6 and 6A.6.

7A.17 This is not a warning against non-conformity; it is an assertion that morality is a common human instinct.

second joy. That he has attracted the flower of young men and nurtured them with instruction: that is the third joy. The *junzi* takes joy in three things, and ruling as king of the world is not among them."

7A.21 Mencius said, "To possess broad lands and a populous state – these are things the *junzi* desires, but his joys do not lie therein. To stand at the center of the world and bring peace to all within the four quarters – this is what the *junzi* takes joy in, but his nature does not lie therein. What the *junzi* takes as his nature is not increased by great accomplishments nor decreased by impoverishment in failure. This is because it is his fixed allotment. What the *junzi* takes as his nature are humanity, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom. Rooted in his heart, they bloom richly in his visage, course down his back and through his four limbs – he moves unspeaking and is understood."

7A.22 Mencius said, "Bo Yi fled from Zhòu and dwelt on the northern seacoast. When he heard that King Wen had arisen, he stirred, saying, 'Why not return to follow him? I have heard that this Lord of the West takes good care of the aged.' Tai Gong fled from Zhòu and dwelt on the eastern seacoast. When he heard that King Wen had arisen, he stirred, saying, 'Why not return to follow him? I have heard that this Lord of the West takes good care of the aged.' When there is one who takes good care of the aged, humane men regard him as a refuge to return to.

"A homestead of five *mu* with mulberry trees planted beneath the wall and a wife to nurture the silkworms is adequate to clothe the aged in silk. With five hens, two sows, and timely mating, the aged will not lack for meat. With one hundred *mu* of field land and a husband to plough it, a family with eight mouths can be free from hunger.

"As for saying that the Lord of the West took good care of the aged, he laid out the fields and the homesteads, taught his people to care for mulberry trees and raise livestock, and to guide their wives in caring for the aged. At the age of fifty one cannot keep warm without silk to wear. At the age of seventy one cannot eat one's fill without meat. When one cannot keep warm or eat one's fill it is called 'starving of cold.' There were no elders who 'starved of cold' among the King Wen's people: that is what the saying means."

7A.23 Mencius said, "If a ruler keeps the fields in order and tax rates low, the people will become wealthy. If food is consumed in a timely way and expenditures are in accord with ritual, resources will be more than sufficient. Water and fire are absolute necessities of life, but if you knock on someone's door in the evening to ask

7A.21 In this passage, the word for human nature, *xing*, is used as a transitive verb in the phrase, "takes as his nature," indicating how our active agency is required to realize our moral potential.

The link between moral and physical vitality we see here echoes Daoist claims, current in Mencius's time, linking enlightenment with physical health.

7A.22 All but the last sentence of the initial paragraph are identical to 4A.13 (see the notes there).

for some, you will never meet with a refusal because they are abundant. When a sage rules the world he ensures that beans and grain will be as plentiful as water and fire, and whenever have there been inhumane people when that has been the case?"

7A.24 Mencius said, "Confucius climbed East Mountain and felt that Lu was small, but when he climbed Mt. Tai he felt the world was small. One who has looked upon the sea finds other waters difficult to compare with it; one who has roamed within the gates of a sage finds other's teachings hard to compare with his.

"There is an art to viewing water: observe the waves. The light of the sun and moon always reflect upon them.

"The nature of flowing water is that it does not move forward until it has filled each depression in the ground. The nature of the *junzi* who sets his heart upon the Dao is that until he has mastered each stage he does not penetrate through."

7A.24 Both mountains are in Shandong. Mt. Tai (one of China's most sacred peaks) is the tallest point in the region.

This passage appears to string three aphorisms with separate points together, though all may concern water metaphors for the art of learning.

7A.25 Mencius said, "The man who rises at cockcrow and sets off to do good all day is a follower of the sage king Shun. The man who rises at cockcrow and sets of to pursue profit all day is a follower of Zhi. If you wish to know the difference between Shun and Zhi, there is nothing but this: the difference between good and profit."

7A.25 Zhi is the Bandit Zhi encountered in 3B.10.

7A.26 Mencius said, "Yangzi's motto is 'act for oneself.' If he could profit the world by plucking out a single hair he would not do it. For Mozi the motto is 'universal love.' If it would profit the world, he would scratch his head bald and walk his heels off. Zimo advocates holding to a middle course. Holding to the middle comes near to it, but if you insist on holding to the middle without considering the balance of circumstances it is really no different from grasping one extreme. What is detestable about grasping one extreme is that it cuts down the Dao, raising up a single part and casting off hundreds."

7A.26 On Yangzi and Mozi, compare 3B.9.

The identity of Zimo is unknown and much debated.

On the idea of balancing circumstances, see the **Glossary**.

7A.27 Mencius said, "Any food will taste sweet to someone starving, any drink will taste sweet to someone parched with thirst. This is because being deprived of normal food and drink has damaged their senses. It is not just in matters of the mouth and belly that this is so, the human heart can be damaged in this way. If a person can keep his heart undamaged by its starvation, then he will have no worry about being inferior to others."

7A.28 Mencius said, "Liuxia Hui would not compromise his integrity in order to be ranked among the three high ministers."

7A.29 Mencius said, "The pursuit of a goal can be compared to digging a well. Even if you dig nine fathoms deep, if you do not reach water, it is just an abandoned well."

7A.30 Mencius said, "Yao and Shun took it as their natures. Tang and King Wu embodied it. The Five Hegemons borrowed it. If you borrow it for a long time and do not return it, who would know it was not yours?"

7A.31 Gongsun Chou said, "Yi Yin said, 'I will not consort with one who is obdurate!' He banished Taijia to Tong and the people were very pleased. When Taijia became worthy and Yi Yin brought him back, the people were again pleased. If a worthy man were minister to a ruler who was unworthy, might he properly banish him in this way?"

Mencius said, "If he had the integrity of Yi Yin, then he might. If he did not have the integrity of Yi Yin, then this would be usurpation."

7A.32 Gongsun Chou said, "The *Poetry* says:

> He eats no food unearned.

Why then does the *junzi* accept food when he does not farm?"

Mencius said, "When a *junzi* dwells in a state, if the ruler employs him there will be peace and plenty, respect and glory. The young men will be filial and honor elders, loyal and faithful. Could 'he eats no food unearned' be better exemplified?"

7A.33 Prince Dian asked, "What is the task of a gentleman?"

Mencius said, "To honor his ambition."

"What do you mean by honoring ambition?"

"Simply humanity and righteousness. Killing a single innocent is inhumanity; seizing what is not yours is unrighteous. Where is the gentleman's dwelling? It is in humanity. What is the gentleman's path? It is righteousness. To dwell in humanity and follow the right, the task of a great man is complete in this."

7A.34 Mencius said, "Everyone believes that Zhongzi is a man who, if it were not offered to him righteously, would refuse even the throne of Qi. But his righteousness is the type that turns away a basket of rice or a pot of gruel. If people had no sense of right greater than that, there would no longer be duties towards parents, or between rulers and subjects, superiors and inferiors. Can we place trust in men in great matters of morality on the basis of minor virtues?"

7A.29 Compare *Analects* 9.19: "Think of it as making a mountain. If, one bucketful short of completion, I stop, then I've stopped"

7A.30 Compare 6B.2: "If you wear the clothes of Yao, chant the words of Yao, and act the acts of Yao, you are simply Yao."

7A.31 After the death of Tang, the Shang founder, Yi Yin stayed on as chief minister to his successors, of whom the problematic Taijia was one.

7A.33 Prince Dian was a son of King Xuan of Qi.

7A.34 Zhongzi is the Chen Zhongzi of 3B.10, a man of exaggerated puritanism.

7A.35 Tao Ying asked, "When Shun was Son of Heaven and Gaoyao was Minister of Crime, had Shun's father Gusou killed a man, what would have been done?"

Mencius answered, "Gusou would have been apprehended, that's all."

"Then Shun would not have prevented it?"

"How could he have prevented it? It would have been Gaoyao's mandate."

"Well then, what would Shun have done?"

Mencius replied, "Shun would have viewed casting away rule of the world like casting off a worn out shoe. He would secretly have borne his father on his back and fled until he came to dwell by the shores of the sea. There he would have lived out his days in joyful contentment, having forgotten the empire."

7A.35 This passage shares an issue raised in 5A.4 concerning the conflict between filiality and the obligation of the ruler to rule righteously. In speaking authoritatively for Shun, Mencius is exercising historical imagination.

7A.36 Mencius traveled from Fan to Qi. Gazing at the heir apparent in Qi he sighed. "The environment of one's home alters one's *qi* as the nurturance one receives there alters one's body. How crucial is one's dwelling place! Is this man not a person, just like the rest of us?"

Mencius said, "This prince has a home, horse and chariot, and clothes, much like other people – yet look at him! It is his environment that makes the difference. How much more the difference would be if he lived in the broadest dwelling in the world!

"The lord of Lu traveled to Song and called out at the Dieze city gate. The gateman said, 'This is not my lord; why does his tone sound so much like my lord's?' There was no other reason: the environments in which they dwelt were similar."

7A.36 While this may initially appear to be an endorsement of hereditary privilege, it is more fundamentally a claim that environment, rather than blood, accounts for differences between people.

7A.37 Mencius said, "To feed someone but bear no feeling of love is the relationship one would have with a pig. To feel love but not respect is like raising a domesticated animal. Reverence and respect come prior to the giving of introductory gifts. If these feelings are not genuine, one cannot detain a *junzi* through empty show."

7A.38 Mencius said, "A man's looks and figure are Tian-endowed nature, but only after becoming a Sage does a man know how to move his figure."

7A.39 King Xuan of Qi wished to shorten the mourning period. Gongsun Chou said, "Isn't a full year of mourning already enough?"

Mencius said, "This is like telling a man twisting his elder brother's arm to twist a bit more gently for awhile. One should instead teach him to be filial and respectful to his elder."

When the mother of one of the princes died, the prince's tutor asked on his pupil's behalf that he be permitted to mourn only a few months. Gongsun Chou said, "How would that be?"

Mencius said, "In this case, the prince wishes to fulfill the entire mourning period, but is prevented from doing so. If he prolongs it even one day longer than otherwise, it would be an improvement. What I spoke of before concerned a case where nothing prevented mourning the full period, but the King would not do it."

7A.40 Mencius said, "A *junzi* teaches others in five ways. Sometimes his teaching transforms them like timely rain; sometimes his teaching perfects their virtues; sometimes he calls forth their talents so they can attain their goals; sometimes he responds to their questions; and sometimes he plants a legacy that can be harvested by future generations. These five are the means by which a *junzi* teaches."

7A.41 Gongsun Chou said, "The Dao is so high and beautiful that it seems like a climb up to heaven: you simply can't get there. Why not make it seem as though it is possible to follow it, and let people strive a bit further each day?"

Mencius said, "A great carpenter does not discard the plumb-line because his students are clumsy craftsmen; Archer Yi did not draw his bow less than full because his students were clumsy archers. The *junzi* draws back his bow, but does not shoot: poised to advance, he stands in the middle of the road, and those who are able follow him."

7A.41 On Archer Yi's bow, see 6A.20.

7A.42 Mencius said, "When the Dao prevails in the world, the Dao follows your every move. When the Dao does not prevail, you must follow the Dao. I have never heard of anyone who used the Dao to follow another."

7A.42 This seems to be modeled on the *Analects* formula of Timeliness: "When the Dao prevails in the world, appear; when it does not, hide" (8.13).

7A.43 Gongduzi said, "When Teng Geng came to study at your gate, he seemed to be a person worthy of being treated with ritual propriety. However, you never answered his questions. Why not?"

Mencius said, "People who rely on their noble status to question me, or on their sense of worthiness, or on their seniority, or on their accomplishments, or on their past acquaintance: such people I do not answer. Teng Geng failed on two counts."

7A.43 Teng Geng was the younger brother of Duke Wen of Teng.

7A.44 Mencius said, "Those who give up pursuing what must not be given up will give up anything. Those who are grudging where they should be generous will begrudge anything. Those who advance brashly retreat in haste."

7A.45 Mencius said, "The *junzi* cherishes things but does not treat them with humanity. He treats people with humanity but not like parents. He loves his parents and treats people with humanity, treats people with humanity and cherishes things."

7A.46 Mencius said, "There is nothing that the wise cannot understand, but they take fulfilling their main task as the most urgent priority. There is nothing that the humane do not cherish, but they take cherishing worthy men as the most urgent priority. The wisdom of Yao and Shun did not lie in knowing everything; it lay in urgently prioritizing their main task. The humanity of Yao and Shun did not lie in loving every person; it lay in urgently cherishing worthy men. A man who cannot perform the three-year mourning rite for parents, but who is punctilious in performing the five-month and three-month mourning for distant relatives, or who takes someone to task for using his teeth to cut his meat while himself gorging on food and guzzling drink, is a man who does not understand priorities."

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BOOK 7
EXHAUSTING THE MIND
PART B

7B.1 Mencius said, "How inhumane King Hui of Liang was! The humane man extends his love from those he cherishes out towards those he does not, while the inhumane man extends from those he does not cherish to those he does."

Gongsun Chou asked, "What are you speaking of?"

Mencius said, "King Hui of Liang sent his people off to war where they would be cut to pulp, all for the sake of territory. After his great defeat, he wanted to go to war once again. This time, fearing he would not be able to prevail, he drove the young men he best loved onto the battlefield, where they were sacrificed on his behalf. This is what I mean by extending from those one does not cherish to those one does."

7B.2 Mencius said, "The *Spring and Autumn Annals* records no righteous wars, although it does indicate that some wars were fought on better grounds than others. A campaign fought to set things right is waged by one in higher authority against a subordinate lord. Peers do not fight one another to set things right."

7B.3 Mencius said, "It would be better have no documents than to believe everything in the *Documents*. I accept only two or three strips of the 'Completion of War' chapter. The humane man has no enemy in the world. When one who is utterly humane campaigns against one who is utterly inhumane, how could the battle shields have 'floated on rivers of blood?'"

7B.4 Mencius said, "There are men who claim, 'I am expert in troop deployment; I am expert in war.' These men commit a great crime. When the ruler of a state loves humanity, he has no enemy in the world. When he turns to the south and launches a campaign, the northern tribes complain; when he turns east and campaigns, the western tribes complain. They say, 'Why does he put us last?' When King Wu campaigned against the Yin, his war chariots numbered three hundred and his warrior braves three thousand. The King said, 'Fear not! I come in peace, not as the enemy of the people.' The sound of people falling to their knees and bowing their heads to the ground was like an earthquake. When we speak of campaigning, the word means 'to set right.' If every man strove to rectify himself, what need would there be for war?"

7B.1 We learn in 1A.5 that King Hui's son and heir was killed in Wei's wars with Qi.

7B.2 The term for "campaign" here (*zheng*) means a war to set things right by punishing tyranny. "Peer" translates the term *di*, which also means enemy. When tyrants fight one another, they are not engaged in righteous war. See the note to 1A.5.

7B.3 The "Completion of War" chapter is now lost. Mencius's willing-ness here to be skeptical of a hallowed text is often noted.

7B.4 As above, the word for "campaign" (*zheng*) is close to the word *zheng*, meaning, "to set right."

7B.5 Mencius said, “A carpenter or a wheelwright can give a man a T-square or compass. He cannot make him skillful.”

7B.6 Mencius said, “When Shun ate dry grains and wild plants, it was as though they would forever be his diet. But when he became Son of Heaven, he wore fine robes and played the zither as his two wives attended him, as though he had always been so.”

7B.7 Mencius said, “From now on I will understand the seriousness of killing the kin of another man. If you kill another’s father, he will kill yours. If you kill another’s brother, he will kill yours. In this way, though you did not yourself kill your father or brother, it is only a step removed.”

7B.7 There seems to have been some historical prompt to this insight, but it is now lost.

7B.8 Mencius said, “In the old days, border checkpoints were established to guard against violence. Today they are established to perpetrate violence.”

7B.9 Mencius said, “If you do not follow the Dao in your own person, you will not be able to make even your wife and children follow it. If you manage others contrary to the Dao, you will not be able even to manage your wife and children.”

7B.10 Mencius said, “One who has stored up profit will not starve in a year of bad harvest, but one who has stored up virtue will not fall into misconduct when the times are corrupt.”

7B.11 Mencius said, “A man who covets a fine reputation is capable of giving away a state of a thousand chariots. But if he is not the man he seems, should he be asked to give up a basket of rice or a bowl of gruel you will be able to read it on his face.”

7B.11 This passage may echo 7A.34.

7B.12 Mencius said, “If a state does not put faith in humane and worthy men it will grow empty. If it lacks ritual and right then the relation between those in authority and those below will be chaotic. If it lacks good policies its resources will be inadequate.”

7B.13 Mencius said, “There have been inhumane men who have come to rule a state, but there has never been an inhumane man who has come to rule the world.”

7B.14 Mencius said, “The people are most important; the state altars to the spirits of earth and grain come next; the ruler is last of all. For this reason, any man who gains the support of the great mass of people reigns as the Son of Heaven. Those who gain the confidence of the Son of Heaven become the lords of states, and those who gain their confidence become grandees. When the lord

7B.14 The initial phrases of this passage are often treated as the epitome of Mencian populism.

of a state endangers its altars, he should be replaced. When fat animals have been offered in sacrifice, the grain offerings have been pure, and the ceremonies performed on schedule, yet drought or floods ensue, then the altars should be replaced."

Replacing the altars was a rebuke to the spirits. If a human lord has fulfilled his moral role, it is the realm of spirits that bears responsibility for natural calamities.

7B.15 Mencius said, "Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui were sages who became teachers to a hundred generations. When they are exposed to the influence of Bo Yi, avaricious men become incorruptible and timorous men become steadfast. When exposed to the influence of Liuxia Hui, mean men become generous and narrow men become open minded. One hundred generations in the past, these sages were propelled to act, and a hundred generations later no one who learns of them fails to be inspired. Could anyone but a sage have such influence? And think how much greater that influence was on those who personally knew them!"

7B.15 On these two sages, see 5B.1, where Mencius uses similar phrasing, but is somewhat more limited in his praise.

7B.16 Mencius said, "'Humanity' means 'human.' When these two are conjoined you have the Dao."

7B.16 This is a play on two words related in Chinese as in English. An exact homophone for the word "human," the graph for "humane" (*ren* 仁) was composed of the graphs for "human" (*ren* 亻) and "two" (*er* 二).

7B.17 Mencius said, "When Confucius departed Lu, he said, 'Go slow, go slow,' as one should depart one's parents' land. When he withdrew from the state of Qi, he rinsed his rice bowl and set right out. That is how one departs a different state."

7B.17 The significance of this is made clear in 5B.1.

7B.18 Mencius said, "The straits that the *junzi* found himself in between Chen and Cai came from his having no connections with people of either higher or lower rank."

7B.18 This passage comments on an episode of Confucius's (the *junzi*'s) life (see *Analects* 11.2).

7B.19 Mo Ji said, "Others do not speak well of me."

Mencius said, "There is no harm in that. A gentleman despises this kind of loose gossip. The *Poetry* says:

> I am burdened with care in my heart,
> Resented by flocks of small men.

This describes Confucius.

> Unable to cut off their resentments,
> He never let his reputation fall.

This describes King Wen."

7B.20 Mencius said, "Worthy men use their enlightenment to try to enlighten others. Nowadays, men use their ignorance to tryto enlighten others."

7B.21 Mencius addressed Gāozi, saying, "A mountain path can quickly widen to a road if it is often used. But if for a time it is not

7B.21 Gāozi is not the Gaozi of the 6A debates.

used, grass will block it up. Your mind, now, has been blocked up by grass."

7B.22 Gāozi, said, "The music of Yu is superior to the music of King Wen."

"Why do you say so?" said Mencius.

"Because the bell rope is frayed to the breaking point."

"That is not sufficient. Do you take the carriage ruts beneath the city gate to have been made by a single team of horses?"

7B.22 Yu was said to have lived a millennium before King Wen. Mencius suggests that what Gāozi interprets as frequent use is merely long use.

7B.23 There was famine in Qi. Chen Zhen said, "The people of the state all believe that you will bring about a second distribution from the Tang granary, Master. But isn't such a distribution unlikely?"

Mencius replied, "This would be like Feng Fu. In Jin there was once a certain Feng Fu, who excelled at wrestling tigers. Later he became a model gentleman. But one day, upon traveling in the countryside, he came upon a crowd that had pursued a tiger and penned it against a hillside, where no one dared attack it. Seeing Feng Fu, the crowd rushed to meet him. Feng Fu rolled up his sleeves and dismounted his carriage. The people were all delighted, but the gentlemen present laughed."

7B.24 Mencius said, "The response of the mouth to flavor, of the eye to beauty, of the ear to music, of the nose to fragrance, of the body to ease: these belong to our nature. But they are inescapable (*ming*), and the *junzi* does not speak of them as our nature. The response of the sense of humanity to one's father or son, of the sense of right to one's lord or minister, of the sense of ritual to one's host or guest, of the sense of wisdom to able men, of the Sage person to the Way of Tian: these are inescapable (*ming*). But they belong to our nature, and the *junzi* does not speak of them as our destiny (*ming*)."

7B.24 This is Mencius's clearest statement of the model of human beings as bifurcated into moral and amoral facets.

Here, the complex word *ming* is translated in multiple ways to convey the underlying sense. Another way to render *ming* in the final phrase would be "fated": *ming* pertains to what is beyond human effort to affect.

7B.25 Haosheng Buhai asked, "What kind of a man is Yuezhengzi?"

Mencius said, "He is a good man, a faithful man."

"What do you mean by 'good' and 'faithful?'"

"A man worth having is called good. A man who possesses goodness in himself is called faithful. One who is filled with goodness is called excellent. A man whose full goodness radiates outward is called great. A great man who transforms others is called a sage. One who transforms others like a sage without their awareness is called spirit-like. Yuezhengzi's quality lies within the first two, but below the other four."

7B.25 Yuezhengzi is also appraised in detail in 6B.13.

7B.26 Mencius said, "Those who desert the Mohists inevitably flee to the school of Yang Zhu, and those who desert Yang's school inevitably come to the school of the Ru. When they come, we should simply accept them. Those who debate with the followers of Yang Zhu and Mozi today behave as though they have chased down pigs run loose: once they have returned them to the pen, they go on to hobble their legs."

7B.27 Mencius said, "Rulers may require tax payments of cloth, grain, or labor. A *junzi* will require one form of tax and relax the other two. If the ruler requires two forms, there will be starved corpses among the people. If he requires all three, fathers and sons will be scattered."

7B.28 Mencius said, "The lords have three treasures: land, people, and policies. If they treasure precious gems, destruction will surely fall upon them."

7B.29 Pencheng Kuo took office in Qi. Mencius said, "He is doomed."

When Penchang Kuo was killed, a disciple asked Mencius, "How did you know that he would be killed, Sir?"

"He was a man of small abilities who had never learned of the great Dao of the *junzi*. That was enough to get him killed."

7B.30 Mencius went to Teng and lodged at the Upper Palace. Some unfinished sandals had been left on a windowsill and the palace attendants searched for them in vain. Someone asked Mencius, "Are your followers as needy as this?"

"Do you think they have come here to steal sandals?" replied Mencius.

"Probably not."

"My manner of providing instruction is that I do not pursue those who leave and I do not refuse those who come. If they come in the right frame of mind I simply instruct them."

7B.31 Mencius said, "Everyone encounters situations they find unbearable. Extending that sensitivity to situations one feels are bearable: that is humanity. Everyone has things that they are unwilling to do. Extending that to things one is willing to do: that is righteousness. If a person can fill himself with the natural aversion to harming other people, he will never deplete his humanity. If he can fill himself with the natural aversion to digging through people's walls to rob them, he will never deplete his righteousness. If he can fill himself with the natural aversion to being addressed with disrespect, he will go nowhere without abiding by the right.

7B.26 The "Ru" are Confucians. See 3A.5.

7B.30 Compare Confucius in the *Analects*: "From those who offer only a bundle of dried sausages on up, I have never refused to teach" (7.7).

"When a gentleman speaks on a matter he should not have addressed, that is appropriating what is not his to take. When he does not speak on a matter he should address, that too is appropriating what is not his to take. Both of these are like digging through people's walls to rob them."

7B.32 Mencius said, "Words that have near application but far reaching implications are good words. A discipline that holds to the essential but can be comprehensive in use is a good *dao*. The words of a *junzi* never fall below the sash and the Dao resides in them. The discipline of the *junzi* is to cultivate his own person so the world will be at peace.

"There are those who abandon their own field and tend the fields of other men They make heavy demands on the other men, but the burden they take on is light."

7B.32 Etiquette required that the eyes be kept above the level of the sash when speaking with another person. The phrase here simply means the *junzi*'s words are always appropriate.

7B.33 Mencius said, "For Yao and Shun is was simply their nature. For Tang and King Wu, they returned to it. Every motion, every stance precise in ritual as one goes round: this is the acme of full virtue. One does not wail for the dead in order to make a show to the living; one does not keep unswervingly to virtue in order to seek appointment; one does not invariably keep one's word in order to gain a reputation for upright action. The *junzi* simply acts as an exemplar as he awaits his command (*ming*)."

7B.33 This passage may be read as a gloss on 7A.1.

On not keeping one's word, see 4B.11.

7B.34 Mencius said, "When one counsels a powerful man one must view him as very small and ignore his grandeur. Their great halls ten yards high, columns and capitals several feet thick: my ambitions have nothing to do with these. Dishes of food lying before them by the yard, attendant concubines by the hundreds: my ambitions have nothing to do with these. Wildly carousing and drinking down wine, then driving full gallop, leading the hunt with a thousand chariots trailing behind: my ambitions have nothing to do with these. Such men do nothing I would want anything to do with; I do nothing that is not by the ancient ordinances. Why should I be in awe of such men?"

7B.34 The perspective Mencius expresses here is consistent with the attitude he advocates in the following passage.

7B.35 Mencius said, "In nurturing the heart, nothing is better than to reduce one's desires. When a man has few desires, though there may be qualities he has not preserved intact, they will be few. As for a man of many desires, though there may be qualities that he has preserved intact, they will be few."

7B.35 In Mencius's time, masters whose approach resembled Daoism advocated asceticism as a means of self-perfection. Mencius appears to adopt the language of these masters in a moderate format.

7B.36 Zeng Xi loved to eat sheep-dates and Zengzi could not bear to eat them. Gongsun Chou asked, "Which is finer, minced and roast meats or dates?"

Mencius said, "Minced and roast meats."

7B.36 Zeng Xi was Zengzi's father.

Gongsun Chou asked, "Then why did Zengzi eat minced and roast meats and abstain from dates?"

Mencius said, "Zeng Xi shared with others a liking for minced and roast meats, but he was unique in his love of dates. When people avoid saying their father's name, it is not the family name they avoid but the personal name. The family name is shared, but the personal name is unique."

In traditional China, sons avoided speaking or writing any word that was part of their late father's name.

7B.37 Wan Zhang asked, "When Confucius was in Chen he said, 'Shall we not return? The young men of our group are reckless but simple. They rush forward to gain their ends, yet they do not forget their original goal.' What made Confucius think of these reckless gentlemen in Lu while he was in Chen?"

Mencius said, "For Confucius, 'If you cannot find men to associate with who will stay squarely on the Dao, you must associate with the reckless or the timid. The reckless rush forward to gain their ends, while the timid have things they are unwilling to do.' Of course Confucius wished for men who would stay squarely on the Dao, but he could not necessarily find them, so his thoughts turned to these alternatives."

"May I ask what sort of man is called reckless."

"Confucius called men like Qin Zhang, Zeng Xi, and Mu Pi reckless."

"Why did he consider them reckless?"

"With grand ambitions they would say, 'Ah, the ancients! The ancients!' But when their conduct was scrutinized it did not match their words. If one is unable to associate with such reckless men, one must hope to find men who will not stoop to impure conduct to associate with. These are the timid, and they are one level down.

"Confucius said, 'Of those who pass my gate and do not enter my chamber, the ones I do not regret seeing pass by are the village charmers. The village charmer is a thief of virtue.'"

"What sort of man is called a village charmer?"

"Such men say, 'What use is this grand ambition? What they say doesn't match what they do and what they do doesn't match what they say. They say, "Ah, the ancients! The ancients!" And how snooty they are as they strut about! We live in this age and we must adjust to this age. Getting along is good enough.' They behave as unctuous toadies to all around them: that is the village charmer."

Wan Zhang said, "If everyone in the village calls him a good man, and in no respect is he considered anything but good, why did Confucius say such a person is a thief of virtue?"

"There is nothing in his conduct to censure, nothing to criticize. He falls in with the customs of the day and blends in with

7B.37 The *Analects* gives the initial quote a bit differently: "The Master was in Chen. He said, 'Let us return! Let us return! The young men of our group are reckless but simple. They weave an emblem but do not know how to trim it'" (5.22).

Mencius's second quote is found in *Analects* 13.21.

The three disciples named are not well known. Only Zeng Xi, Zengzi's father, plays a significant role in the *Analects*, and he appears only once.

The *Analects* merely reads, "The village charmers are thieves of virtue" (17.13).

a corrupt age. In his comportment at home he appears loyal and faithful, in his conduct abroad he seems pure and incorruptible, so everyone likes him and he feels he is always in the right. But you cannot pursue the Dao of Yao and Shun with such a man. That is why Confucian called him a thief of virtue. Confucius said, 'I hate things that seem to be what they are not. I hate foxtail weeds, for fear they will corrupt crop seedlings. I hate flattery, for fear it will be corrupt righteousness. I hate artful speech, for fear it will corrupt good faith. I hate the melodies of Zheng, for fear they will corrupt music. I hate purple, for fear it will corrupt crimson. I hate the village charmers, for fear they will corrupt virtue.'

"The *junzi* returns to the enduring standard. When the standard is correct the common people will be raised up, and when the common people are raised up, there will be no more deviance and error."

Partially quoted in the *Analects* as well: "I detest that purple has displaced crimson; I detest that the melodies of Zheng have disordered the music of court; I detest that crafty mouths have overturned states and households" (17.18).

7B.38 Mencius said, "From the time of Yao and Shun to the time of Tang it was over five hundred years. Men like Yu and Gaoyao saw Yao and Shun with their own eyes, while men like Tang only heard about them. From the time of Tang to the time of King Wen it was over five hundred years. Men like Yi Yin and Lai Zhu saw Tang with their own eyes, while men like King Wen only heard about him. From the time of King Wen to the time of Confucius it was over five hundred years. Men like Tai Gong Wang and Sanyi Sheng saw King Wen with their own eyes, while men like Confucius only heard about him.

"From the time of Confucius to the present it is only a century and over. We are still not far from the time of the sage, and we are dwelling so near to his homeland! Yet if there is no one to follow him, well, then, there is simply no one to follow him."

b b b

7B.38 This melancholy conclusion returns to the themes of Books 1-3 and Mencius's mission find a True King and transform the world. Its notion of a Tian-guided or time-guided calendar for utopia resonates with 2A.1 and 2B.13.

Lai Zhu was a minister to the Shang founder, Tang, and Sanyi Sheng was an aide to King Wen of the Zhou.

Glossary of Terms and Texts

List of Glossed Items

Dao

Deference towards Elders (*ti*)

Destiny (see *ming*)

Documents, Book of

Fate (see *ming*)

Filiality (*xiao*)

Grandee (*dafu*)

Heart / Mind (*xin*)

Hegemon (*ba*)

Human Nature (*xing*)

Humanity (*ren*)

Integrity (*cheng*)

Junzi

***Li* (cf. ritual)**

Lords of the States (*zhuhou*)

Ming

Music (*yue*)

Poetry, Book of

Profit (*lì*)

Qi

Right; Righteousness (*yi*)

Ritual (*li*)

Sage (*sheng*)

Spring and Autumn Annals

Tian

Timeliness (*shí*)

True King (*wàng*)

Virtue (*de*)

***Xing* (see Human Nature)**

Well-Field System (*jingtian*)

Will (*zhi*)

World (*tianxia*)

Worthy Man (*xian*)

Yi and Di Tribes

***Zhi* (see Will)**

Dao (*dao* 道). The term “Dao” (often translated as “Way”) is a key term in the *Mencius*. It denotes the ideal moral path for individuals, rulers, and states to follow in order to realize a perfection of character and life that is destined for humankind, if only humankind summons the will to follow its natural calling. The basic meaning of the term *dao* is “path,” and it often is used metaphorically in this sense: the Dao can be “walked” or “traveled,” just as a path can be. However, there is a secondary meaning of “method” or “formula” that the *Mencius* frequently invokes.

Many different schools of Warring States era thought called their central teachings “the Dao,” most famously the school of Daoism, which used the term in a cosmological sense so distinctive that it was later applied as the name of the school. The Confucian Dao focuses on various forms of ethical conduct on the personal, social, and political levels, and when that conduct is associated with sage rulers of the past, the model of rule that they exemplified was known as the “Dao of the True King” (see “True King,” below).

The same term, *dao*, is also often used to denote a personal creed, policy, or art, as in the *dao* of a warrior, craftsman, or common person. Opposing philosophical schools might refer to one another’s teachings as “*dao*s,” understanding that their own teaching was “The Dao,” while another school’s was “their *dao*,” a distinction that would be represented only by context: the Chinese terms would be the same. When the term *dao* is used to denote a Confucian ethical and political ideal, it is rendered “Dao” in this translation. When used in other senses, it is rendered “*dao*.”

Deference towards Elders (*ti* 悌). The phrase “deference towards elders” translates a single term, *ti*, which literally means fulfilling the role of a younger brother. Alternative translations of “brotherliness” or “fraternity” are more precise, but usage suggests the broader definition in most cases, which also preserves the essential feature of age hierarchy that the more concise translations miss. As in the case of filiality, Mencius sees deference to elders as an innate disposition that originates in a familial context. However, whereas filiality retains a single focus on parents, *ti* denotes a disposition that gravitates by analogy to elders other than one’s own older brothers. We can see this in 3B.4, where Mencius characterizes the moral person as “filial at home and *ti* abroad,” and in Mencius’s discussion in 6A.5 of the way we transfer respect for our brothers to others in social contexts in order to express our sense of right.

Destiny. See *Ming*.

***Documents* (*Book of Documents*: *Shu* 書; *Shangshu* 尚書).** The *Book of Documents* (*Shang shu* 尚書) one of the “Five Confucian Classics,” along with the *Book of Poetry* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, described on this list. The *Documents* includes speeches and narratives, all in archaic, difficult language, chronologically arranged, from tales of the legendary kings Yao and Shun through the Zhou era. A small number of these chapters seem to be records of statements by early Zhou leaders that were recorded as texts not long after the time of their purported authorship, but most of the chapters seem to be much later in date, probably dating from Mencius’s own era. The *Documents* we have today is not the same as the text Mencius knew: much of the text Mencius knew has been lost, and many of those chapters were replaced long after Mencius’s time with newly imagined, spurious versions. In some of these spurious chapters, citations found in the *Mencius* are likely themselves one source that later writers relied upon in reimagining those texts.

Citations of the *Documents* in the *Mencius*:

Attributed citations from extant chapters: "Tang shi" 湯誓 (Oath of Tang), 1A.2; "Yao dian" 堯典 (Canon of Yao), 5A.4; "Kang gao" 康誥 (Announcement of Kang), 5B.4.

Unattributed citations found in extant chapters: "Kang gao," 3A.5; "Yao dian," 5A.3; "Luo gao" (Announcement at Luo) 洛誥, 6B.5.

Attributed citations from lost chapters, found now in spurious chapters of the received text: "Tai shi" 泰誓 (Great oath), 3B.5, 5A.5; "Yi xun" (Instructions of Yi) 伊訓, 5A.7; "Wucheng"武成 (Completion of war), 7B.3.

Unattributed citations found now in spurious chapters of the received text: "Tai shi," 1B.3, "Taijia"太甲,"2A.4, 4A.8; "Yue ming (I)" 說命 (Decree of Yue), 3A.1; "Zhonghui zhi gao" 仲虺之誥 (Announcement of Zhonghui), 3B.5; "Wu cheng," 3B.5; "Jun Ya" 君牙, 3B.9.

Unattributed citations not found in received text: 1B.11 (2), 3B.9, 5A.4, 7B.4 (commentators suggest that the 1B.11 and 7B.4 passages may cite the lost "Tang zheng" 湯征 [Campaign of Tang]).

Fate. See *Ming*.

Filiality (*xiao* 孝). Filiality pertains specifically to the relationship that a child (for Mencius, a son) bears towards his parents, usually conceived in terms of the father. Mencian theory lays great emphasis on innate moral dispositions, and Mencius claims that every person possesses at birth an unqualified disposition to love his or her parents. The preservation and extension of this love are the building blocks of adult morality. Being a filial child is not simply ethical in itself, it is the essential component of actualizing as both child and adult one's innately social nature and realizing one's human potential by joining in a moral community. So important is this virtue for Mencius that *xiao* at time seems to be the most fundamental of cardinal virtues, without which none of the other virtues in possible. Conversely, in the case of the sage king Shun, Shun's perfect filiality so fully guaranteed all other virtues that on the basis of filiality alone he was worthy of being designated to rule the world, despite having no other qualifications. More interesting and complex reasoning concerning filiality is visible in Mencius's rationalization of the unfilial conduct of a friend he admires (4B.30).

Gentleman (*shi* 士). The term translates *shi*, which may denote a man of learning or an accomplished warrior. The Warring States period was one in which the social class structure of China was undergoing a major change: an old aristocratic order was giving way, under the stress of endemic war, to allow men with valuable talents to rise in elite culture. Members of this class of upwardly mobile men were called *shi*, and the Confucian movement, principally composed of such men, pictured them in a largely positive light. Hence Mencius's use of *shi* in the normative sense of "gentleman" here. However, just as with the word "gentleman," the moral value of a *shi* was expressed in the degree to which he resembled in his virtues an aristocrat, despite lacking high birth. Thus not every instance of the term *shi* is appropriately translated by "gentleman" (some other translations use the word "scholar" in order to limit term's range to one acceptable to Confucians, but the essential qualities of the people the *Mencius* denotes by this term are more cultural and moral than intellectual). In the passage here, the word *shi* is linked together with

"commoners" (*shuren* 庶人), emphasizing the definitive, though narrowing distance that separated the *shi* class for the hereditary nobility.

Grandee (*dafu* 大夫). "Grandee" generally denotes a man who occupies a position in a state and at court by virtue of hereditary succession. During early periods of ancient Chinese history, the barrier between noble and common people was, in general, an impermeable one, and although a man might be talented in various ways, it would be exceptional for him, absent some period of general social chaos or dynastic transition, to achieve elite status that could be passed on to his children. During the Spring and Autumn Period (771-453), given the pressures of endemic interstate warfare, cross-class social mobility seems to have become more common, as reflected in the prominence of the *shi* (gentleman) class, peopled by men who earned court recognition and position on the basis of talents valuable to the state. But the most typical route to upward mobility, service in war, was closed to most commoners, because wars were relatively small-scale affairs, dominated by men skilled in chariot warfare, something that few commoners were able to master. In the Warring States period, warfare shifts to a mass army, infantry basis, providing more opportunities to commoner horsemen and swordsmen, as well as to men who could master the arts of troop deployment, diplomacy, logistics, and so forth, as well as to merchants and artisans who could provide critical means and tools. This facilitated increased mobility, and we have instances of *shi* being granted hereditary elite status, as the paths to accumulated power multiplied. Under these circumstances, it is not always the case that someone identified as a grandee in the *Mencius* was a hereditary holder of that designation. Increasingly, the term *dafu* was applied to men of varied backgrounds, some of whom passed the designation to their sons, others of whom simply bore it during their lifetimes. Thus the contrast between a *shi* and a grandee, while rooted in hereditary privilege, sometimes may simply indicate the dignity of their role at court.

Heart / Mind (*xin* 心). The word *xin* is often treated as problematic, because it embraces cognitive functions that we sometimes assign in English to the "mind" as well as affective responses that we sometimes assign to the "heart." For example, it would seem odd to say that we calculate algebra in our hearts or that we love a person with all our mind. But we do generally understand that there is actual no division of mental function between the heart and mind: if someone says she knows in her heart that she has made a mistake, we understand that the "knowing" function is as much a brain function as knowing the right answer to a math problem. The difference of assignment to the two organs usually just marks whether or not somatic effects associated with affective functions are being felt. Ancient Chinese did not distinguish heart and mind in this way, using a single term, *xin*, to denote the seat of all mental activity. The *xin* was understood to be located, in some way, in the heart, and the written graph for the word was, in fact, a simplification of a pictograph of the heart organ.

Some translators signal the overlap of affective and cognitive functions by translating *xin* as heart-mind, but here the renderings of "heart" and "mind" will be assigned in the way that seems most appropriate in context, with a general preference given to "heart," because, in a wide variety of cases, mental judgments are only deemed significant if accompanied by an affective, evaluative confirmation.

The identical word *xin* is also used in a related but distinct way to denote a nexus of affective sense and disposition, as in 2A.6, where Mencius describes the four "seeds" of our

innately moral nature in terms of four senses or predispositions towards morality: the senses (*xin*) of dismay on another's behalf, shame, deference, and of right and wrong.

Hegemon (*ba* 霸). "Hegemon" was an informal title granted to a handful of powerful state rulers during the Spring and Autumn period. These men, through a combination of military strength, skilled diplomacy, and at least a reputation for honor were acknowledged, each in his day, by many of the other great state rulers, to be their overlords and the chief protectors of the powerless Eastern Zhou King. The Mencian school of Confucianism scorned these men as examples because they relied on force and clever dealing rather than on the power of virtue and ethical governance, which Confucians believed not only to be the tools of an ideal ruler, but to have been shown effective during the early centuries of the Western Zhou, as well as in the times of former great kings, such as Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang. Those rulers had, in Confucian eyes, reigned as "True Kings": leaders whose perfect power and governance was based on their exemplary morality and care for the people. Although some of the hegemons, particularly the first, Duke Huan of Qi, were seen as wise rulers who showed some of the qualities of ideal kings, their resort to coercion both within their states and in military and diplomatic matters, demonstrated that they fell far short of the transformative moral perfection of the model sage ruler. Most texts agree that five hegemons had ruled during the Spring and Autumn era, but while three state leaders were acknowledged by all to be among the five, the other two slots are variously attributed.

Human Nature (*xing* 性). The phrase "human nature" renders the single word *xing*. *Xing* is actually the nature of any living thing, and sometimes texts preface the term with *ren* 人 to clarify that it is human, rather than, say, an ox's nature that is under discussion, as in 6A.3. The character for *xing* combines a "heart" signifier (*xin* 忄) and the phonetic component *sheng* 生, which was, in Mencius's day, a virtual homophone for *xing*. In a pathbreaking analysis, A.C. Graham showed that when the *Mencius* was composed, it is likely that the same character represented both the words *xing* and *sheng* ("life; to live; living" – see the dialogue in 6A.3).

For Mencius, what constitutes human nature is whatever is both spontaneous and universal in people. It is the sum of our natural dispositions, which we may discover by reflecting on exactly what it is we do purely by untutored disposition. The example of our spontaneous rush of anxiety upon suddenly seeing a child about to fall in a well (2A.2) illustrates the types of thought experiments that help us discern what impulses are spontaneous within us, as opposed to those which are guided by some sort of particular habit or calculated motive. In this sense, *xing* is a purely descriptive concept, and this creates problems for Mencius, who wants to show both that our *xing* includes moral impulses and also that it is those impulses that define us as a species, rather than equally spontaneous amoral dispositions, such as the impulse to eat when hungry, an issue Gaozi notes in 6A.4. Although this issue is raised obliquely in passages such as 6A.14 and 6A.15, the *Mencius* confronts it fully only in Book 7, where both descriptive (amoral) and prescriptive (ethical) aspects of our spontaneous dispositions are acknowledged, and the meaning of the term *xing* is confined to the latter (7A.21, 7B.24).

Humanity (*ren* 仁). The term "humanity" or *ren*, was a Confucian keyword, the meaning of which was much affected by context. Its employment as an ethical term may well have been an innovation of Confucius. In the *Analects*, *ren* is treated as a mysterious term; disciples repeatedly ask Confucius what he means by it, and in most cases in that text *ren* seems to denote a

comprehensive moral disposition, embracing all others. In the *Mencius*, however, the meaning of the terms seems more restricted, corresponding to a disposition towards care and concern for others, rooted strongly in family love, but extending towards others in varying degrees of strength, which may be increased through a regimen of ethical self-cultivation. It is often discussed as one in a set of cardinal virtues, among which righteousness (*yi*; discussed below) is its most regular partner. The term *ren* is also used to name an approach towards governance that prioritizes the welfare of the people over all other considerations, and a person who is humane sometimes simply is for the *Mencius* a ruler who adheres to such a policies. In this translation, the term *ren* will be consistently translated as "humanity" when a noun and "humane" when an adjective. The phrase "not *ren*," which more often means something opposite *ren* than simply a lack of *ren*, will be translated as "inhumanity" or "inhumane."

Integrity (*cheng* 誠). "Integrity" renders the word *cheng*, a term that can also be translated as "sincerity" or "genuineness" when a noun, but which can also be used adverbially. In my view, the word "integrity" best captures the ethical meaning of the term as a noun, but since it cannot be adapted to an adverbial form, the other terms are superior choices in general. (Occasionally, the word "integrity" also translates *zhi* 志: see the entry for Will.) In the *Mencius*, *cheng* carries a relevant meaning only in 4A.12 and 7A.4, and in these instances, "integrity" works well. I am using it in spite of the fact that in translating *The Doctrine of the Mean*, where *cheng* is a frequent keyword, I use forms of "genuine." (In Neo-Confucian thought from the eleventh century CE onwards, the role of the word *cheng* is broadened to act as central ethical concept, and its rare instances in the *Mencius* came to be seen as deeply significant.)

***Junzi* 君子.** The term *junzi* 君子 translates literally as "ruler's son," or "prince." It originally referred to members of the hereditary nobility, but came to be associated more with their superior manners than with their birth. In this sense, the term is parallel to "gentleman," and it commonly translated in that way. However, although *junzi* sometimes simply refers to an ordinary ruler or a member of the elite class, it more often denotes an ideal of human excellence that was at the center of Confucian ethics. This term *junzi* can be applied to a person who has committed himself to the path of self-improvement leading towards full humanity, or to someone who has fully realized the ideal. In the former sense, the term overlaps with the term *shi*, for which the translation of "gentleman" is used here. But the terms *shi* and *junzi* tend to be used in a rough hierarchy, with the term *shi* denoting an aspirant to moral excellence and the term *junzi* indicating a high degree of moral attainment. (This distinction accords with the original meanings of the term, only the second indicating hereditary nobility.) When *junzi* is employed as an ethical term in this sense, it will be left untranslated, appearing only in transcription, as in this instance.

***Li* 禮.** See Ritual.

Lords of the States; Lords (*zhuhou* 諸侯). The Mencius refers to the rulers of the various independent political entities of Warring States China by the term *zhuhou* (諸侯: the many lords). It is traditional to render this phrase as "the feudal lords," but because the political system of the time bears only a superficial resemblance to the political forms of medieval Europe, which define feudalism, and also because the term is applied in the Mencius both to independent rulers

of the age and to territorial overlords in prior ages of the unified monarchy, the term is avoided here. The range of titled, hereditary rulers who are generally covered by the phrase “the many lords” is specified in 5B.2, where the traditional, feudal titles for the various lordly ranks are used.

***Ming* 命 (fate; destiny; decree).** One of the more complex concepts in the *Mencius*, *ming* is glossed here under its transcription because it carries so many meanings in English, varying with context. When the term *ming* refers to outcomes that cannot be influenced by effort, the translation of “fate” is appropriate, but when Mencius speaks of “violating *ming*,” the translation is deficient, because this is clearly an act over which one has control. In such senses, the term *ming* carries a prescriptive meaning: “destiny.” It denotes a moral mission one must devote unceasing effort to fulfill. These dual functions of the word *ming* play an important role in passages, such as 7A.1-3.

The root meanings of the word *ming* are, as a verb, to command, or, as a noun, a command, decree, or mandate. Used as an ethical concept, *ming* was conceived as something ordained by Tian. Looking towards the future, Tian “commands” us to be ethical, and to seize the moral opportunities that the world presents us. In this sense, our *ming* is our destiny. If we are unable to fulfill our mission in spite of our best efforts, however, it is not that we did not try; in retrospect we find that the world simply offered us no opportunities. In this way, we may discover that although we were commanded to do our best, Tian decreed (*ming*) that we would not succeed. That is *ming* as fate. Looking to the future, we know what we *must* do; looking back, we discover what we could *not* do. *Ming* as destiny is always forward looking; *ming* as fate always backward looking.

Ming is also a difficult concept in its relation to human nature, our *xing*, which is discussed in 7B.24. Here, *ming* bears an adjectival sense relates to aspects of personhood that are *inescapable*. For example, there is no effort that can overcome natural urges for air, food, or drink. We are “fated” to have these, in the sense that they are urges that arise without our bidding; they have nothing to do with effort (though we can use effort to suppress them). Mencius’s claim is that there are certain ethical aspects of human nature that are equally inescapable, such as the shocked response we have when we suddenly see someone about to die, as in the example of the cild falling into the well. Mencius does *not* want to say these are “fated,” or *ming*, because that would imply that there is nothing people can do to affect their moral responses. Mencius’s ethical advocacy relies on a notion that they key to moral conduct is precisely to affect these responses by enhancing and expanding them. For reason, Mencius states that we should not refer to the moral aspects of our nature as *ming* (inescapable), and while our appetitive urges belong to our nature, we should not refer to them as our *xing*, because they are inescapable (*ming*).

Confucians like Mencius were attacked by their philosophical adversaries, the Mohists, for being “fatalists,” propagating a doctrine of *ming* that discouraged moral action by denying the efficacy of human agency. Some passages in both the *Analects* and the *Mencius* show that there was, in fact, some basis for this (see, e.g., *Mencius* 1B.16, where Tian’s actions are described fatalistically). Moreover, the Confucian doctrine of Timeliness, which cautions moral people to devote themselves to political effort only when the times are propitious – when real moral opportunity is apparent – gave Mohists grounds to picture Confucians as opting out of moral effort when the world was in most desperate need. The Mohist text *Mozi* stresses these issues in chapters titled, “Against Fate” and “Against Confucians.”

Music (*yue* 樂). Confucians believed that music was an important cultural force, with transformative power over a people and their culture. It was seen as an extension of ritual *li*, and Confucians studied music and dance as part of their education. (Idealized early Confucian accounts of ancient education make music and dance the first subjects studied by young boys.) Sages of the past composed music (performed with dance that often narrated a story) which represented a type of ethical signature. The morality of a region could be known by listening to its music. The pervasiveness of music in the *Mencius* is somewhat obscured by the fact that when modern readers encounter passages cited from the *Book of Poetry*, they are read as lyrics only, when, in fact, the people who first assembled the text of the *Mencius* would have heard them as songs – in some cases songs performed to orchestral accompaniment – that were sung, not merely cited, by Mencius and his interlocutors. The written graph for music, 樂, was also the graph for the word *le*: delight; joy. Originally virtual homophones, the two words diverged in sound in later eras, but the play on words would have been heard, as well as seen, by early readers of the text.

***Poetry* (*Book of Poetry*: *Shi* 詩; *Shijing* 詩經).** The *Book of Poetry*, is an anthology of 305 poems dating from approximately the time of the Zhou conquest in the 11th century to the seventh century. It is one of the Five Classics of Confucianism, and unlike the *Book of Documents*, the *Book of Poetry* was essentially complete by Mencius's era. The lines cited in the *Mencius* are found in the received text we use today. Although the poems are varied in authorship and nature, the anthology was understood to have been compiled by sagely men, including Confucius, who was believed to have ordered the poems. The odes of the *Book of Poetry* were part of the education of young elite men, who memorized them and learned how to chant them (they were all as much songs as poems), and who were taught that they even the lighthearted love songs among them were pregnant with meaning that led the sage anthologists to include them. A well educated man could deploy the poems to give weight to his speech, intoning lines from them as authoritative confirmation of his statements. This was a particular interest of Confucian education, which is why we see Mencius frequently illustrating or concluding his arguments by chanting lines of poetry.

Odes cited in the *Mencius*: 26 (7B.19), 32 (6B.3), 101 (5A.2), 112 (7A.32), 154 (3A.3), 155 (2A.4), 179 (3B.1), 192 (1B.5), 197 (6B.3), 198 (1A.7), 203 (5B.7), 205 (5A.4), 212 (3A.3), 235 (2A.4, 3A.3, 4A.4, 4A.7), 237 (1B.5, 7B.19), 240 (1A.7), 241 (1B.3), 243 (5A.4), 244 (2A.3), 247 (6A.17), 249 (4A.1), 250 (1B.5), 254 (4A.1), 255 (4A.3), 257 (4A.7, 4A.9), 258 (5A.4), 260 (6A.6), 272 (1B.3), 300 (3A.4, 3B.9).

Profit (*lì* 利). The *Mencius* opens with an attack on "profit," and this is no accident. The underlying term, (*lì*), was an ethical keyword for the Mohist school, the philosophical adversaries of Mencius. The term *lì*, which can also be rendered "utility" or "welfare," denoted the basic value standard of the Mohists, who advocated a selfless utilitarian ethics based on maximizing social welfare. The *Mencius* highlights the term *lì* in a way that suggests its association with self-serving greed, probably in order to associate Mohism with selfish profit-seeking. In the opening passage of the text, King Hui of Liang's initial statement employs the term in a way that could be taken to mean either "benefit" or "profit," but the *Mencius* is anxious to take it in the latter sense, signaling its tendentious mission, a tactic we see again in 6B.4, where Mencius argues with a thinker often associated with Mohism.

***Qi* 氣.** *Qi* is a pervasive concern in Chinese thought, In the *Mencius* it plays a significant role in this passage alone, but in so elaborate a way as to signal its importance to Mencius's teachings. In general, *qi* sometimes denotes a rarified substrate that pervades or constitutes all things in the cosmos, but in Warring States thought it was most often discussed as an animating life force that provides both sustenance and energy to living things, including people. There appear to have been widespread and various practices for harnessing *qi* through breathing exercises, physical training, skill cultivation, and forms of focused meditation, to promote health, longevity, and success in action (practices that contemporary Chinese medical hygiene continues to rely on). The most detailed textual description from the era appears in the generally Daoist "Inner Enterprise" (*Neiye*) chapter of the text *Guanzi*, where self-cultivation practices focusing on control of the *qi* are linked to goals of both settling the mind and building the *qi* into a "flood-like" force, resonant with this *Mencius* passage. *Qi*, conceived as a bodily force, substance, or energy, remains a key concept today in Chinese society today, particularly in medicine and martial arts.

Right; Righteousness (*yi* 義). The term "right," or "righteousness," translates the Chinese term *yi* 義, which plays an outsize role in the philosophy of the *Mencius*. In some contexts it is best rendered as "duty" or, when an adjective, as "fitting." *Yi* is a key term in the *Mencius*: it is frequently used in parallel with humanity (*ren*) to denote core virtues of the morally perfected person, and, with *ren*, it is one of a set of four cardinal virtues, together with *li* (ritual; see 1A.7, note 6) and wisdom, that are central to Mencius's portrait of the morally good nature of human beings (see, e.g., 2A.6; 6A.6). The notion of the "right" is also central in the *Mencius* because of the text's insistence that moral action must ultimately not be based on rules, but on a natural or trained intuition of what is ethically optimal in specific contexts, a theme that is related to the doctrine of Timeliness (see the general comment on this passage, above). Many passages in the *Mencius* concern matters of discerning *yi* in context, where applications of ethical rules of thumb are not adequate. (For more on *yi*, see 1A.7, note 9, on *li*.)

Ritual (*li* 禮). The term *li*, poorly rendered as "ritual," denotes a vast formal and informal code of stereotyped conduct that ranges from ordinary etiquette to intricately choreographed ceremonies of court and religion. For example, conventional rules of manners that held that a younger brother should walk slightly behind his older brother (6B.2), or that unrelated men and women should never physically touch (4A.17), were examples of *li*, but the intricate protocol of diplomacy and the choreography of action and speech during state and ancestral sacrifices also belonged to the realm of *li*. In different contexts, *li* could be translated as "etiquette," "courtesy," "propriety" or "ceremony," in addition to the cognate terms "ritual" and "rite."

The reason that "ritual" is a poor translation is that in the modern West, ritual sometimes signifies triviality – "mere ritual" – whereas for most of the educated elite in ancient China, *li* was an essential component of good human conduct. What unites the various categories of *li* is the common feature of form: action according to *li* exhibits respect for others and for oneself by marking it with the syntax of civilization; those who act without *li* are behaving like the non-Chinese barbarian tribes – speaking a foreign language of interpersonal conduct that has not yet been touched, in the Chinese view, by the influence of ethics and virtue. This distinction sometimes gives *li* an even broader meaning, close to *yi* (義, right), and there are many instances in early texts where the criticism of an act as "contrary to *li*" is clearly identical to saying it is unethical. This overlap in ethical terms is a philosophically meaningful one: the term *yi*, "right,"

includes a strong aesthetic dimension: conduct is right only when it "fits" aesthetically in a way "proper" to a social context, an overlap of outward demeanor and moral value reflected in the common etymology of the term *yi* with its cognate, *yi* 儀: ceremony; demeanor. Under Confucian views, behavior that feels morally repellent to observers inevitably offends their sense of propriety on both aesthetic and ethical grounds, which is why the *Mencius* can say, "Acts of *li* that are not *li*, acts of *yi* that are not right – the great man does not perform these" (retranslating 4B.6). (Note that "right" has a key aesthetic component in English as well: for example, we might say of Chippendale chair in a child's room that it was not "right" in that location, signaling both artistic and social issues about fit.)

Confucians were invested in *li* beyond ethical commitment. They were trained as masters of *li*, arbiters of ordinary etiquette and expert directors of formal ceremonial events. Many ordinary Confucians, known as Ru (儒) in Chinese, made their way in the world by serving as masters of court and religious ceremony, or as experts in family rituals, such as coming of age rites, community feasts, marriages, and funerals, for which they were available for hire. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Confucian thought, *li* is viewed as the principal means of self-cultivation and the perfection of ethical sensibilities and skills. It is the practical path towards becoming a *junzi*. At some points where *li* is mentioned in the *Mencius*, many scholars believe a text is being cited, either the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites) or *Yili* 儀禮 (Ceremonial Rites). However, these classics are likely to have been compiled only during the Han Dynasty, and it seems more cogent to treat most of these *Mencius* passages as referring to customary formulas.

Sage (*sheng* 聖). The term "sage" (*sheng* 聖) denotes a supreme level of both moral perfection and wisdom in a hierarchy of terms that includes "gentleman" (*shi* 士), "worthy man" (*xian* 賢), and *junzi* 君子. The term "sage," when applied to individuals, generally denotes an exemplary person of historical importance. Yao and Shun are models of sages: they pair moral perfection with the highest levels of political accomplishment. Men famous for living lives dedicated to extremes of moral will, such as Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui, are also called sages in the *Mencius*. A discussion of such men in 5B.1 makes clear that for Mencius, Confucius was the greatest of sages. All these figures might also be termed "worthies" or *junzi*s; "sage" denotes their inclusion in the most exclusive group of moral exemplars.

***Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋).** The *Spring and Autumn Annals* was originally a compilation of the court notes of official scribes in the state of Lu during the years 722-481, recording in terse entries events noticed at court. The text is extant today and, apart from a few entries which appear to have been inserted later (such as notice of Confucius's birth), the entries seem free of larger significance. However, a tradition, already live in Mencius's day, has held that Confucius edited an earlier, original version of the text, and by means of subtle alterations in such features as pronouns, conjunctions, naming formulas, and the like, signaled to initiated readers his sagely moral judgment of events, both as they were and also as contrasted with a vision of future utopia. It is this secret coded message that, in words found in 3B.9, struck fear into the heart of rebellious subjects and cutthroat sons: that is, the usurpers and scoundrels typical in Warring States era courts. The *Annals* remains enshrined as one of the Five Confucian Classics, and traditional exegetical schools have left us their keys to unlocking the hidden meanings of the text (keys which, unfortunately, do not seem to turn very well).

Tian 天. Tian was the high deity of Zhou state religion. Originally, Tian was solely worshipped by the small ethnic group of the Zhou, who, prior to the conquest of the Shang in 1045, were located on the outskirts of the region united, to greater and lesser degrees, but the Shang royal house. The state religion of the Shang included a pantheon, at the apex of which resided a different high deity, Di 帝. After the conquest, texts suggest that the Zhou chose to identify Tian and Di, treating these as alternative names for a single deity. The word *tian* means "sky," and the word is often translated "Heaven." When the word is used simply to denote the physical sky in the *Mencius*, it is rendered "heaven," but whenever its role as a conscious agent is invoked, the term is left in transcription. An exception is made for the title of legitimate kings of the unified empire, who were referred to by the title "Tian's son" (*tianzi* 天子), which is rendered in its traditional English form of "Son of Heaven."

Timeliness (*shí* 時). The doctrine of Timeliness is a core Confucian idea that is encapsulated in its most basic form in the *Analects*: "When the Dao prevails in the world, appear; when it does not, hide" (8.13). From this notion grew the idea that the sage reads ethical imperatives from real world contexts and not from rules alone. The most complete statement of the idea in the *Mencius* appears in 5B.1, where a series of three exemplary men who followed particular rules of moral conduct is described, and they are followed by Confucius, whose rule is to follow no rule other than contextual appropriateness, and who is celebrated as the "Sage of Timeliness," superior to all others. This is the only place in the *Mencius* where the principle is given a name (*shi*); more generally, the English phrase "doctrine of Timeliness" conveys a notion thematic to, but not explicit in the text. The notion that a great man embodies a virtuous perspective that becomes the source of the imperatives he follows, rather than any set of rules, is fundamental to the text's portrait of Mencius, who is repeatedly asked to explain how his actions accord with simple ethical rules. Mencius's responses all take the form of showing how specific contexts change general rules into individual case rules that the trained judgment of the *junzi* is capable of discerning, while ordinary people are not.

Mencius's own career is framed by an exceptional judgment of Timeliness, explained in 2A.1 and 7B.38. In these passages, Mencius explains why, despite Confucius's admonition in *Analects* 8.13, he is willing to "appear" at a time when the Dao is clearly in eclipse, adjusting the doctrine of Timeliness itself to his own sagely judgment.

True King (*wang* 王). During the Warring States era, Confucians hoped to see China reunified under a single ruler, whose sage qualities would match those of legendary culture heroes and earlier dynastic founders, all of whom were pictured as having been ideal men as well as ideal rulers. The term glossed here, *wang*, is simply the generic term for king, used as a noun, and in this sense, the term rarely denotes anything other than an ordinary ruler, including all those of the rank of *wang* encountered in the text. However, used as a verb (*wàng* 王: "to rule as a king"), the meaning is frequently normative, meaning to rule as a king should rule. Although the Chinese text does not mark the places where the phrase "rule as king" (*wàng*) denotes this ideal, the translation uses the phrase "rule as a True King" wherever this is the sense.

Virtue (*de* 德). "Virtue" translates the term *de*, which denotes a global quality of personality that generally suggests both a commitment to morality and an ability to attract and influence others. In earlier periods, the *de* of a power holder was connected with his ability and willingness to

provide benefits of rank and wealth to others, making him an object of loyalty in, say, a manner comparable to a European feudal lord or contemporary Mafia don. In Confucianism and other philosophical schools of the time, *de* was an ethical term. Nevertheless, as the Tang Dynasty figure Han Yu 韓愈 argued, *de* is basically an ethically neutral term. One can speak of a person's "bad *de*," and a horse could be valued for its *de* (though even here, the Confucians tended to moralize *de*, as in *Analects* 14.33: "The Master said, 'A fine horse is not praised for its strength, but for its virtue'").

***Xing* 性.** See Human Nature.

Well-Field System (*jing tian* 井田). The well-field system was an important part of Mencius's view of the perfect past and utopian future. He believed that at one time land was divided into parcels of nine squares, in the pattern of the Chinese character for the word "well": 井. The eight outer fields were assigned as private plots to eight families. The central field was "common" (or the "duke's field"). The eight families worked the common field as their tax contribution to the ruler. The ruler, in such a scheme, could assign the proceeds of specific common fields as hereditary stipends to particular noble families, or as a temporary stipend to a minister assigned to a particular functional role. Few historians believe such a system was ever actually implemented. It seems chiefly to have served as an ideal model for some Warring States era Confucians.

Will (*zhi* 志; also ambition, integrity). "Will" renders the word *zhi*, a term which is closely linked to action, as its role as "leader of the heart" in 2A.2 implies. Elsewhere, *zhi* seems best translated as "ambition" (7B.34). Moral ambition is associated with the character of a person worthy of being called a gentleman, or *shi*, the written graph for which appears in some orthographic forms of *zhi* (including modern forms), added to the graph for *xin* (heart). It is in the sense of "ambition" that *zhi* is used in key passages of the *Analects*, where Confucius asks his disciples to "tell me your *zhi*" (5.26, 11.26). At some points, however, *zhi* seems best rendered as "integrity" (7A.31) denoting a strength of purpose that can be relied upon not to be swayed (see *Analects* 9.26: "One can seize the general in charge of the three army divisions, but one cannot seize the *zhi* of a peasant").

World (*tianxia* 天下). "The world" translates a term that literally means "that which is beneath the sky" (*tianxia* 天下). In some contexts, this term denotes all places inhabited by humankind, but more often it refers to the Chinese cultural sphere, roughly the territory that had been unified under the control of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1045-771), occupied since by the various contending states. Some translators render the term, "the Empire" to convey the way this term relates to the ideal goal of restoring the unified polity of the Western Zhou. It is also often rendered as "all-under-Heaven."

Worthy Man (*xian* 賢). "Worthy man" translates the term *xian*, which means something beyond "worthy," in the sense of meritorious. *Xian* suggests both moral excellence and wisdom, and is a quality that assigned to men who could also be labeled as "gentlemen" (see 1A.1, note 5) or *junzi*s. Among these terms, only the term *xian* was applied to women in ancient China (though not in the *Mencius*), where it also denoted a combination of moral excellence and wisdom,

sometimes implying beauty as well. The term *xian* is described in commentary on the text *Xunzi* as "one who is second to a sage," with sage (*sheng*) naming, for Confucians, the ultimate moral exemplar.

Yi and Di Tribes (*yidi* 夷狄). Yi 夷 and Di 狄, as well as Rong 戎, mentioned in later passages, were semi-generic terms for non-Chinese tribes who lived at the edge of or beyond civilization, as it was conceived by the Zhou. They were "barbarians" to Mencius. Usually, the term Yi was applied to tribes of the east and southeast, although the *Mencius* also refers to the "western Yi." Di was applied to tribes of the extreme north, and Rong to those the west. In fact, many non-Chinese Yi and Di peoples continued to inhabit pockets within the larger region of Zhou dominance, some assimilating fully by Mencius's time, others retaining their distinct languages and cultures. Often, the single term Yi was used as a fully generic term for all non-Chinese peoples, as in 3A.4.

***Zhi* 志.** See Will.

INDEX OF PERSONS

When the identification of a person relies exclusively on Zhao Qi 趙岐 (108-201 CE), the earliest commentator on the *Mencius*, this is noted by addition of the superscript [ZQ]. Zhao's identifications are indispensable, but many appear to be simply reasoned from context, and in other cases we have no means of knowing whether Zhao relied on evidence, inference, a teaching tradition transmitted from earlier eras, or creative imagination. I occasionally cite other commentators, but, as in the translation, I generally avoid detailed discussion of commentarial opinions.

Where dates are supplied, I have relied for prominent rulers on the chronology in the *Cambridge History of Ancient China*, and retain the Zhou conquest date favored there: 1045. For others I have chiefly relied on Qian Mu's 錢穆, *Xian-Qin zhuzi xinian* 先秦諸子繫年, which mainly provides dates for Warring States era figures. All dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

This list should be consulted with an understanding that not all those listed on it were real people – some are legendary heroes, others served as standard tropes personifying some skill or personal quality, others are figures in tales the *Mencius* recounts that may be simple fables.

b b b

B

Bandit Zhi 盜跖 (蹠), 3B.10, 7A.25. Probably a legendary figure, though some texts claim he was a brother to Liuxia Hui. The Daoist text *Zhuangzi* raises Zhi to the stature of an anti-Confucian philosophical amoralist.

Bi Gan 比干, 2A.1, 6A.6. An uncle of Zhòu the wicked last king of the Shang, he remonstrated with Zhòu, who had him killed.

Bi Zhan 畢戰, 3A.3. An officer of the state of Teng.[ZQ]

Bo Gui 白圭 (c. 375-290), 6B.10, 6B.11. Frequently confused with a Spring and Autumn period person of the same name. Zhao Qi identifies him as a native of Zhou; he appears in other texts as a persuader at the court of King Hui of Liang, and also as a resident in Zou, Mencius's home state.

Bo Yi 伯夷, 2A.2, 2A.9, 3B.10, 4A.13, 5B.1, 6B.6, 7A.22, 7B.15. A sage who lived in the era of the Shang-Zhou transition. Disaffected by the conduct of the Shang king Zhòu, he and his brother Shu Qi, withdrew to live as hermits. Hearing of King Wu's rise, the emerged to serve him, but finding him morally deficient, they fled once again into poverty and obscurity, ultimately dying of starvation. Mencius lists Bo Yi among celebrated sages whose perfection lay in following a single ethical rule.

Bogong Qi 北宮錡, 5B.2. A man from the state of Weì. [ZQ]

Bogong You 北宮黝, 2A.2. A swordsman cited by Mencius as an exemplar.

Boli Xi 百里奚, 5A.9, 6B.6, 6B.15. A famous minister to Duke Mu of Qin (r. 659-621) during the Spring and Autumn period.

C

Cao Jiao 曹交, 6B.2. Younger brother of the lord of Cao. [ZQ]

Chang Xi 長息, 5A.1, 5B.3. A disciple of Gongming Gao. [ZQ]

Chen Dai 陳代, 3B.1. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Chen Dai 陳戴, 3B.10. Brother of Chen Zhongzi.

Chen Jia 陳賈, 2B.9. A grandee in the state of Qi. [ZQ]

Chen Liang 陳良, 3A.4. A Confucian master of Mencius's time.

Chen Xiang 陳 相, 3A.4. A disciple of Chen Liang who chose to follow the agriculturalist Xu Xing instead.

Chen Xin 陳辛, 3A.4. Younger brother of the Chen Xiang.

Chen Zhen 陳臻, 2B.3, 2B.10, 6B.14, 7B.23. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Chen Zhongzi 陳仲子, 3B.10, 7A.34. A member of the ruling clan of Qi, known for his extreme commitment to moral purity. (Like all members of the ruling clan of Qi in Mencius's day, his family is variously given as Chen or Tian 田.)

Cheng Jian 成覸, 3A.1. A warrior from Qi, known for his valor.

Chi Wa 蚳鼃, 2B.5. A grandee in the state of Qi.

Chong Yu 充虞, 2B.7, 2B.13. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Chunyu Kun (also rendered Shunyu Kun) 淳于髡, 4A.17, 6B.6. A courtier in Qi, celebrated in other sources for his wit.

Chuzi 儲子, 4B.32, 6B.5. A councilor at the court of Qi.

Confucius (551-479), 1A.4, 1A.7, 2A.1, 2A.2, 2A.3, 2A.4, 2A.7, 3A.2, 3A.4, 3B.1, 3B.3, 3B.7, 3B.9, 4A.2, 4A.7, 4A.8, 4A.14, 4B.10, 4B.18, 4B.21, 4B.22, 4B.29, 5A.4, 5A.6, 5A.8, 5B.1, 5B.4, 5B.5, 5B.7, 6A.6, 6A.8, 6B.3, 6B.6, 7A.24, 7B.17, 7B.19, 7B.37, 7B.38. Kongzi 孔子. Principal authority of the Ru school. The *Mencius* employs Confucius as a model sage, particularly celebrating his adherence to Timeliness: the prioritization of judgments based on virtue and experience over rule-based action.

D

Dai Busheng 戴不勝, 3B.6. An officer in the state of Song.

Dai Yingzhi 戴盈之, 3B.8. Zhao Qi identifies this person as a grandee of Song. Zhao You 趙佑 believes that this is an alternative name for Dai Busheng.

Dan Zhu 丹朱, 5A.6. The son of Yao, passed over for the throne in favor of Shun.

Danfu, the Old Duke (古公亶夫**)**. *See* King Tai. (Some scholars read this name: Danfu, Lord of Gu.)

Dian 墊, 7A.33. A son of King Xuan of Qi.

Duangan Mu (also rendered Duan Ganmu) 段干木, 3B.7. A famous worthy of Wei in the time of Marquis Wen (r. 445-396).

Duke Ding of Teng 滕定公, 3A.2. Father of Duke Wen, whom Mencius counseled.

Duke Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685-643), 1A.7, 2B.2, 4B.21, 6B.7. The first of the Spring and Autumn period hegemons. Duke Huan was a heroic figure in the state of Qi, along with his chief minister, Guan Zhong.

Duke Ling of Weì 衛靈公 (r. 534-493), 5B.4. A ruler whose court Confucius visited (see *Analects* 15.1)

Duke Mu of Lu 魯繆公 (r. 415-383), 2B.11, 5B.6, 5B.7, 6B.6. Famous in Confucian trandition as a patron of the Confucian masters Zengzi and Zisi. (The Duke's name appears in some other texts, as 魯穆公.)

Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659-621), 5A.9, 6B.6. A powerful Spring and Autumn period ruler, whose chief minister, Boli Xi, was regarded as an outstanding strategist. The Duke is sometimes considered one of the Five Hegemons.

Duke Mu of Zou 鄒穆公, 1B.12.

Duke of Zhou 周公, 2A.1, 2B.9, 3A.1, 3A.4, 3B.9, 4B.20, 6A.6, 6B.8. Younger brother of King Wu. Upon the King's sudden death in 1042, the Duke assumed the role of regent for his young nephew, King Cheng. He suppressed a revolt by his suspicious brothers, Guan Shu and Cai Shu, and effectively ruled for seven years, until ceding power to the grown King. Confucians credited him with creating many of the institutions that brought stability to the Western Zhou era, including the system of *li* followed by the Zhou state. He is often viewed as a sage on the same level as his father, King Wen, and brother, King Wu (and generally treated as of greater virtue than the latter).

Duke Ping of Jin 晉平公 (r. 557-532), 5B.3.

Duke Ping of Lu 魯平公 (r. 322-303), 1B.16.

Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636-628), 1A.7, 4B.21. The second of the Five Hegemons, whose difficult path to the throne was the basis of a romantic historical narrative that enhanced his fame.

Duke Wen of Teng 滕文公, 1B.13, 1B.14, 1B.15, 3A.1, 3A.3. A young ruler of a small state who sought Mencius's counsel.

E

Earl of Ge 葛伯, 3B.5. A dissolute ruler first counseled then overthrown by Tang.

F

Feilian 飛廉, 3B.9. A courtier to Zhòu, last ruler of the Shang, known for his skill as a runner. Mencius indicates that he was executed by King Wu, but other texts have a different account. (His same is elsewhere rendered 蜚廉.)

Feng Fu 馮婦, 7B.23. Said to have been fierce warrior of the state Spring and Autumn era state of Jin.

Fu Yue 傅說, 6B.15. Chief minister to the strong mid-Shang ruler Wuding.

G

Gaoyao 皐陶, 3A.4, 7A.35, 7B.38. The legendary Minister of Crime under Shun.

Gaozi 告子, 2A.2, 6A.1, 6A.2, 6A.3, 6A.4, 6A.6. A senior contemporary of Mencius, with whom Mencius debates concerning human nature. Almost nothing is known of him outside the Mencius, and scholars dispute whether he was a Mohist or a Confucian.

Gāozi 高子, 2B.12, 6B.3, 7B.21, 7B.22. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ] Some scholars argue that the figure in 6B.3 is a different person.

Gong Liu 公劉, 1B.5. A pre-dynastic leader of the Zhou people.

Gong Zhiqi 宮之奇, 5A.9. A minister at the seventh century court of the small state of Yu.

Gongduzi 公都子, 2B.5, 3B.9, 4B.30, 6A.5, 6A.6, 6A.15, 7A.43. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Gonggong 共工, 5A.3. A legendary minister, banished by Shun.

Gonghangzi 公行子, 4B.27. A grandee of the state of Qi.[ZQ]

Gongming Gao 公明高, 5A.1. A disciple of Zengzi. [ZQ]

Gongming Yi 公明儀, 3A.1, 3B.3, 3B.9, 4B.24. Variously recorded as a follower of Confucius's disciples Zizhang and Zengzi.

Gongshuzi 公輸子, 4A.1. A Spring and Autumn period man from Lu, famed for craftsmanship.

Gongsun Chou 公孫丑, 2A.1, 2A.2, 2B.2, 2B.6, 2B.14, 3B.7, 4A.18, 6B.3, 6B.13, 7A.31, 7A.32, 7A.39, 7A.41, 7B.1, 7B.36.

Gongsun Yan 公孫衍, 3B.2. A persuader from Wei famed for his skill as a diplomaatic strategist. His name is elsewhere given as Xi Shou 犀首.

Gongyizi 公儀子, 6B.6. A high minister in the state of Lu.

Goujian 勾踐 (r. 496-465), 1B.3. A king of the state of Yue, famous rebuilding his state and avenging a devastating military defeat at the hands of the neighboring state of Wu. He is sometimes listed as the last of the Five Hegemons.

Guan Shu 管叔, 2B.9. A brother of the Duke of Zhou who led an insurrection against him.

Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645), 2A.1, 2B.2, 6B.15. Chief minister to Duke Huan of Qi in the seventh century, and one of the most famous political innovators of his day. Prior to his appointment, when aiding a competitor for the throne Duke Huan ultimately gained, he had attempted to assassinate the future duke and had been detained and imprisoned by the neighboring state of Lu. Duke Huan requested that Lu return him for execution, and once he was back in Qi, Duke Huan released him and made him his principal counselor. Guan Zhong is credited with conceiving the role of the hegemon. The *Mencius* also refers to him by his personal name, Guan Yiwu 管夷吾.

Gun 鯀, 5A.3. The wicked father of the legendary sage king Yu, banished (by some accounts executed) by Shun.

Gusou 瞽瞍, 4A.28, 5A.2, 5A.4, 6A.6, 7A.35. The wicked father of Shun.

H

Hai Tang 亥唐, 5B.3. A Spring and Autumn period native of the state of Jin.

Haosheng Buhai 浩生不害, 7B.25. A native of Qi. ZQ

Hou Ji 后稷, 3A.4, 4B.29. The founding ancestor of the Zhou royal house. Hou Ji, whose name is often given in translation as "Prince Millet," was said to have been the inventor of agriculture, and minister under Yao.

Hu He 胡齕, 1A.7. A courtier in Qi. ZQ

Hua Zhou 華周, 6B.6. A warrior in the state of Qi.

Huan, Minister of War 桓, 5A.8. Huani Tui 魋, a native of Song and an enemy of Confucius (*see Analects* 7.23).

Huan Dou 驩兜, 5A.3. A minister to Yao and Shun, banished by Shun.

J

Ji Huan 瘠環, 5A.8. A eunuch courtier in the state of Qi. ZQ

Ji Huanzi 季桓子 (d. 492), 5B.4. Leader of the powerful Ji warlord family in Lu during Confucius's lifetime.

Ji Ren 季任, 6B.5. The younger brother of the ruler of the small state of Ren. ZQ

Ji Sun 季孫, 2B.10. Identity unclear. (The name may be a surname, Jisun, lacking a personal identifying neame.

Jiao Ge 膠鬲, 2A.1, 6B.15. A wise courtier to Zhòu, the last ruler of the Shang.

Jie 桀, 1B.8, 4A.9, 5A.6, 6B.2, 6B.6, 6B.9, 6B.10. The wicked last ruler of the Xia Dynasty, and a prototype for all rulers whose immoral conduct leads to the extinction of their states.

Jingzi 景子, 2B.2. A grandee in the state of Qi. ZQ

Jizi 箕子, 2A.1. A virtuous uncle of the wicked Shang ruler Zhòu, who feigned madness to escape death at his nephew's hands.

K

King Hui of Liang 梁惠王 (r. 369-319), 1A.1, 1A.2, 1A.3, 1A.4, 1A.5, 7B.1. Ruler of the powerful state of Wei 魏, which the Mencius refers to by its capital city, Liang.

King Li [of Zhou] 周厲王 (r. 857-842), 6A.6. An unsuccessful ruler of the late Western Zhou, whose reign was a prelude to the dynasty's fall less than a century later.

King of Song 宋王, 3B.6. Most likely King Kang (康) of Song, who reigned 337-286.

King Tai [of Zhou] 周太王, 1B.3, 1B.5, 1B.14, 1B.15. A pre-dynastic leader of the Zhou people and the grandfather of King Wen, said to have led the Zhou migration to its dynastic homeland in the Wei River valley. He is celebrated in the *Mencius* for prioritizing the welfare of his people over his own possession of the throne, for which he was rewarded by the loyalty of his people.

King Wen [of Zhou] 周文王 (r. 1099-1050), 1A.2, 1B.2, 1B.3, 1B.5, 1B.10, 2A.1, 2A.3, 3A.1, 3A.3, 3B.9, 4A.7, 4A.13, 4B.1, 4B.20, 6A.6, 6B.2, 7A.10, 7A.22, 7B.19, 7B.22, 7B.38. The key pre-dynastic ruler of the Zhou people, credited with transforming his state into a cultural model. King Wen is one of the principal heroes of Confucianism. While still a lord in the service of the Shang, King Wen was known as Lord of the West.

King Wu [of Zhou Wu] 周武王 (r. 1049-43), 1B.3, 1B.8, 1B.10, 2A.1, 2B.12, 3B.9, 4A.9, 4B.20, 6A.6, 7A.30, 7B.4, 7B.33. Son of King Wen and the conqueror of the Shang Dynasty in 1045. Regarded as a sage ruler by Confucians, King Wu died only three years after the conquest, and many of the institutions established by the new Zhou state are credited to the brother who consolidated Zhou power, the Duke of Zhou.

King Xiang of Liang 梁襄王 (r. 318-296), 1A.6. Son of King Hui. Mencius departed his court after forming a low estimation of his moral qualities.

King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 (r. 319-301), 1A.7, 1B.2, 1B.3, 1B.4, 1B.5, 1B.6, 1B.7, 1B.8, 1B.9, 1B.10, 1B.11, 4B.3, 5B.9, 7A.36, 7A.39. The principal target of Mencius's persuasions in the *Mencius*. He was responsible for Qi's invasion of the state of Yan in 314, which ultimately led to the decline of Qi.

King You [of Zhou] 周幽王, 6A.6. The wicked last king of the Western Zhou. Tales of his outrageous behavior resemble tales told of Jie and Zhòu, the wicked last rulers of the Xia and Shang dynasties.

Kong Juxin 孔距心, 2B.4. The governing officer in the Qi border district of Pinglu.

Kuang Zhang 匡章 (c. 360-290), 3B.10, 4B.30. A minister and general in the state of Qi and a friend whom Mencius defends.

L

Lai Zhu 萊朱, 7B.38. A worthy man who lived at the outset of the Shang Dynasty.

Li Lou 離婁, 4A.1. A legendary figure, famous for keen eyesight.

Liuxia Hui 柳下惠, 2A.9, 5B.1, 6B.6, 7A.28, 7B.15. A semi-legendary worthy of the state of Lu, whose many virtues are probably elaborations of the conduct of an actual person (a man named Zhan Qin, who possessed territory in Liuxia). The *Mencius* views Liuxia Hui as a sage on a par with Bo Yi, but steadfast in his adherence to a moral rule precisely opposed to Bo Yi's aloof purism.

Longzi 龍子, 3A.3, 6A.7. An ancient worthy man. [ZQ]

Lord Hui of Bi 費惠公, 5B.3. Lord of a territory within the state of Lu during the fifth century.

Lord of the West (西伯). *See* King Wen.

M

Marquis of Chen, Zhou 陳侯周, 5A.8. Perhaps the last ruler of the state of Chen, which was extinguished by Chu in 479; commentary is conflicting on this identification.

Meng Ben 孟賁, 2A.2. A legendary bravo of great valor.

Meng Jizi 孟季子, 6A.5. Unidentified. Zhao Qi's commentary refers only to "Jizi," and it is possible that "Meng" is an accidental interpolation.

Meng Ke 孟軻 (c. 390-305), 1B.16. Mencius, referred to by his personal name.

Meng Xianzi 孟獻子 (d. 554), 5B.3. Leader of a powerful warlord family in Lu.

Meng Zhongzi 孟仲子, 2B.2. According to Zhao Qi, a cousin of Mencius who studied with him, but whether this has any basis is unknown.

Mengshi She 孟施舍, 2A.2. A warrior cited by Mencius as an exemplar.

Mian Ju 緜駒, 6B.6. A skillful singer of the state of Qi.

Minzi 閔子, 2A.2. A disciple of Confucius (Min Ziqian 閔子騫).

Mizi 彌子, 5A.8. A courtier in Weì who was a brother-in-law of Zilu.

Mo Di 墨翟 (Mozi) (c. 480-390), 3B.9, 7A.26, 7B.26. Mencius's principal philosophical adversary, along with Yang Zhu. Mozi was a fifth century thinker, whose school of militant altruists advocated a selfless utilitarian ethics based on maximizing social welfare. Mencius objected to several aspects of Mohist thought. The Mohist doctrine of "universal love" advocated overcoming all personal preferences based on ordinary feelings of preference for family and friends: Mencius found this both a violation of human nature, the dispositions of which were intrinsically ethical, and also the

substitution of a simplistic rule for the nuanced judgement of virtuous wisdom that the Confucian ritual syllabus instilled in people. Mohists also advocated for frugality, in opposition to Confucian advocacy for the importance of ritual expenditures. Unlike Yangism, Mohism seems to have been a strong movement during Mencius's lifetime. In the *Mencius*, Mozi is sometimes simply referred to as Mo.

Mo Ji 貊稽, 7B.19. An unidentified man counseled by Mencius.

Mu Pi 牧皮, 7B.37. Named in the *Mencius* as a disciple of Confucius. No further record exists.

Mu Zhong 牧仲, 5B.3. An associate of Meng Xianzi in Lu during the sixth century.

P

Pencheng Kuo 盆成括, 7B.29. A courtier in Qi.

Peng Geng 彭更, 3B.4. A disciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Peng Meng, 4B.24. A student of legendary Archer Yi.

Q

Qi 啟, 6A.6. Son of Yu, who succeeded him as king, establishing the Xia as a dynastic house.

Qi Liang 杞梁, 6B.6. A warrior in the state of Qi.

Qin Zhang 琴張, 7B.37. A disciple of Confucius.

R

Ran Niu 冉牛, 2A.2. A senior disciple of Confucius.

Ran Qiu 冉求 (c. 522-462), 4A.14. A senior disciple of Confucius.

Ran You 然友, 3A.2. Tutor to the future Duke Wen of Teng.[ZQ]

S

Sanyi Sheng 散宜生, 7B.38. A worthy in era of the Shang-Zhou transition.

Shen Tong 沈同, 2B.8. An envoy from the Qi court who visited Mencius.

Shen Xiang 申詳, 2B.11. A worthy man of Lu in the fifth century. A man of nearly identical name (申祥) is identified as the son of Confucius's disciple Zizhang in the *Liji*.

Shenzi 慎子 (慎滑釐), 6B.8. A military courtier in Lu, contemporary with Mencius.

Shenyou Xing 沈猶行, 4B.31. A disciple of Zengzi.[ZQ]

Shi Kuang 師曠, 4A.1, 6A.7. A famous music master of Jin during the Spring and Autumn period.

Shizi 時子, 2B.10. A courtier in Qi.

Shun 舜, 2A.2, 2A.8, 2B.2, 3A.1, 3A.44, 3B.9, 4A.1, 4A.2, 4A.26, 4A.28, 4B.1, 4B.19, 4B.28, 4B.32, 5A.1, 5A.2, 5A.3, 5A.4, 5A.5, 5A.6, 5A.7, 5B.1, 5B.3, 5B.6, 6A.6, 6B.2, 6B.3, 6B.8, 6B.10, 6B.15, 7A.16, 7A.25, 7A.30, 7A.35, 7A.46, 7B.6, 7B.33, 7B.37, 7B.38. Second of the three great sage rulers who initiate Confucian history. Shun is celebrated by Mencius more enthusiastically and extensively than any other sage, with the possible exception of Confucius. The feature of Shun that most draws Mencius's attention is his filial devotion to his wicked father and mother, as well as his love for his sinister younger brother. Born a commoner, Shun was hated by his parents and brother, and his heroic effort to sustain and love them nevertheless led Yao to appoint him as his successor in ruling the world.

Shunyu Kun. *See* Chunyu Kun.

Sicheng Zhenzi 司城貞子, 5A.8. The surname means "overseer of the city wall," and may be either an official position or a family name. Commentary is unclear whether he was a native of Chen or of Song.

Song Goujian 宋勾踐, 7A.9. A persuader who visited Mencius.

Song Keng 宋牼 (c. 360-290), 6B.4. A well known thinker and persuader, contemporary with Mencius, whose name is usually rendered Song Jian (銒). He is listed among the many masters assembled by the rulers of Qi at Jixia, in the Qi capital. His best known doctrines concern the morality of reducing desires, indifference to humiliation, and non-violence, the last of which resembled Mohist pacifism.

Sunshu Ao 孫叔敖, 6B.15. A famous minister in the state of Chu.

T

Tai Gong 太公, 4A.13, 6B.8, 7A.22, 7B.38. More usually known as Tai Gong Wang (望: Grand Duke Wang), he was general-in-chief of King Wu's campaign to conquer the Shang in 1045, and was rewarded with the territory that came to be the state of Qi. Also known by his personal name Jiang Ziya 姜子牙.

Taiding 太丁, 5A.6. The son of Tang and heir apparent, who predeceased his father.

Taijia 太甲, 5A.6, 6B.8, 7A.22. The grandson of Tang, who succeeded to the Shang throne, but was temporarily exiled for poor conduct by the senior minister Yi Yin.

Tang 湯 (r.c. 16th century), 1B.3, 1B.8, 1B.11, 2A.1, 2A.3, 2B.2, 2B.12, 3B.5, 4A.9, 4B.20, 5A.6, 5A.7, 6B.2, 6B.6, 7A.30, 7B.33, 7B.38. The founding king of the Shang Dynasty, who

overthrew Jie, the wicked last king of the Xia. He is treated by Mencius as one of the great sages of the past, coupled with Kings Wen and Wu of the Zhou.

Tao Ying 桃應, 7A.35. A disciple of Mencius. ZQ

Teng Geng 滕更, 7A.43. The younger brother of Duke Wen of . ZQ

W

Wai Bing 外丙, 5A.6. A son of Tang who succeeded him as king, and the father of the fourth king, Taijia.

Wan Zhang, 3B.5, 5A.1, 5A.2, 5A.3, 5A.5, 5A.6, 5A.7, 5A.8, 5A.9, 5B.3, 5B.4, 5B.6, 5B.7, 5B.8, 7B.37. A disciple of Mencius whose questions in the *Mencius* focus on issues of historical interpretation.

Wang Bao 王豹, 6B.6. According to Zhao Qi, a skillful singer in Weì; other sources indicate Qi.

Wang Huan 王驩, 2B.6, 4A.24, 4A.25, 4B.27. A courtier of Qi (also called Zi'ao 子敖).

Wang Liang 王良, 3B.1. A skilled charioteer in the Spring and Autumn period state of Jin.

Wang Shun 王順, 5B.3. A courtier in the service of Lord Hui of Bi.

Wei Zhong 微仲, 2A.1. Younger brother of Weizi Qi, below.

Weizi Qi 微子啟, 2A.1, 6A.6. A virtuous uncle of the wicked Shang ruler Zhòu.

Wu Huo 烏獲, 6B.2. A legendary strong man.

Wuding 武丁 (r. c. 1250-1189), 2A.1. A Shang king, responsible for a mid-dynastic revival.

Wuluzi 屋廬子, 6B.1, 6B.5. A disciple of Mencius; his personal name is given as Lian 連.

X

Xi 奚, 3B.1. Called "court favorite Xi" in the text, a courtier in Spring and Autumn period Qi.

Xi Shi 西施, 4B.25. A legendary beauty whose name symbolized the ideal of an alluring woman.

Xiang 象, 5A.2, 5A.3, 6A.6. The brother of the sage ruler Shun, Xiang is a prototype of the jealous younger brother; he plots with his parents to kill Shun, and Shun's generous treatment of so wicked a brother is a topic of analysis in the *Mencius*.

Xianqiu Meng 咸丘蒙, 5A.4. A disciple of Mencius. ZQ

Xie, 3A.4. Legendary Minister of the People under Yao.

Xie Liu 泄柳, 2B.11, 3B.7, 6B.6. A worthy man of Lu in the time of Duke Mu.

Xu Bi 徐辟, 3A.5. Adisciple of Mencius. [ZQ]

Xu Xing 許行 (c. 390-315), 3A.4. A master in the school of thought that prized agriculture and took the mythical Sublime Farmer as its inspiration.

Xue Juzhou 薛居州, 3B.6. A courtier in Song.

Y

Yan Ban 顏般, 5B.3. A close associate of Lord Hui of Bi.

Yan Chouyou 顏讎由, 5A.8. A brother-in-law of Confucius's disciple, Zilu, living in Weì.

Yan Hui 顏回 (c. 521-481), 2A.2, 2B.2, 3A.1, 3A.4, 3B.4, 4A.1, 4A.2, 4B.32, 5A.4, 5A.5, 5A.6, 5A.7, 5B.1, 5B.6, 6A.6, 6B.2, 6B.8, 6B.10, 7A.30, 7A.46, 7B.33, 7B.37, 7B.38. Confucius's leading disciple, who predeceased his teacher.

Yanzi 晏子, 1B.4, 2A.1. Yan Ying (嬰), famous minister in the state of Qi during the time of Confucius. Many tales concerning him are preserved in the compendium *Yanzi Chunqiu*, which was likely compiled in the state of Qi over a period including Mencius's lifetime.

Yang Hu 陽虎, 3A.3, 3B.7. Steward of the Ji family in Lu during the time of Confucius. Also called Yang Huo 陽貨 (as in 3B.7).

Yang Zhu 楊朱 (c. 395-335), 3B.9, 7A.26, 7B.26. A philosophical adversary of Mencius, who advocated a type of egoistic doctrine. Mencius viewed his intellectual mission as countering the extreme altruism of the Mohists on one hand, and the extreme egoism of Yangism on the other. Unlike the case of Mohism, no texts of Yangism are recorded, although some scholars believe that Yangist texts are preserved in sections of the *Zhuangzi*. Yang Zhu is also referred to as Yangzi and, simply, Yang in the *Mencius*.

Yao 堯, 2A.2, 2B.2, 3A.1, 3A.4, 3B.4, 3B.9, 4A.1, 4A.2, 4B.32, 5A.4, 5A.5, 5A.6, 5A.7, 5B.1, 5B.6, 6A.6, 6B.2, 6B.8, 6B.10, 7A.30, 7A.46, 7B.33, 7B.37, 7B.38. The legendary ruler who is, for Confucians of Mencius's time, the beginning of history. Yao instituted the institutions of civilization that demarcated the culture ultimately inherited by the Zhou Dynasty from barbarian surroundings. He designated Shun to be his successor. Although probably originally culture heroes from independent mythological streams, the first three sage emperors of Confucian history, Yao, Shun, and Yu, were linked together in a consecutive narrative during the Warring States period. The *Book of Documents* became the major repository of texts inscribing this legendary history.

Yi 羿, 4B.24, 6A.20, 7A.41. A legendary archer, supposedly a Xia Dynasty era lord.

Yi 益, 3A.4, 5A.6. Minister to Yu and Yu's designated successor, who ceded the throne to Yu's son Qi.

Yi Qiu 弈邱, 6A.9. A legendary master of the game of *yi* (弈; comparable to *go*).

Yi Ya 易牙 , 6A.7. A chef of legendary skill, said to have lived in Weì during the Spring and Autumn era.

Yi Yin 伊尹 , 2A.2, 2B.2, 5A.6, 5A.7, 5B.1, 6B.6, 7A.31, 7B.38. Chief minister to the Shang founder, Tang, and to his son and successors. One of the sage exemplars most often cited by Mencius.

Yi Zhi 夷之, 3A.5. A Mohist who sought to visit Mencius.

Yin Shi 尹士, 2B.12. A native of Qi. [ZQ]

Yingong Zhituo 尹公之他, 4B.24. A skillful archer.

Yong Ju 癰疽, 5A.8. The commentator Zhao Qi does not take this to be a personal name, but rather as an ailment, carbuncles, that the person in question healed: thus, The Carbuncle Healer. However, other texts refer to this person using different, near-homophonous characters, such as Yong Qu 雍渠 (*Shiji*). It is likely that the *Mencius* names this Qi courtier in such a way as to signal his repellant nature.

You Ruo 有若 (c. 518-457), 2A.2, 3A.4. A disciple of Confucius, who, after Confucius's death, briefly acted as teacher to other disciples.

Yu 禹, 2A.8, 3A.4, 3B.9, 4B.20, 4B.26, 4B.29, 5A.6, 6B.11, 7B.22, 7B.38. Third and last of the founding emperors of Confucian history. Originally the hero of a flood myth, during the Warring States era the legend of Yu became associated with the legends of Yao and Shun. Yu served Shun's as a minister designated to control the great floods of the time, a task his father Gun, had failed to perform. Through extravagant efforts personally supervising the dredging of the great rivers, Yu brought the floods under control and was designated the successor Shun. Unlike Shun, Yu passed his throne to his son, initiating the Xia Dynasty (though Mencius complicates this tale in 5A.6). Yu was the most revered sage in the teachings of the Mohist school, and it may be that his enshrinement in the Confucian pantheon of sages was an attempt at mythological cooptation.

Yuezheng Qiu 樂正裘, 5B.3. An associate of Meng Xianzi in Lu during the sixth century.

Yuezhengzi 樂正子, 1B.16, 4A.24, 4A.25, 6B.13, 7B.25. Yuezheng Ke (克), a student of Mencius, as 4A.24-25 make clear, but his position at the court of Lu was very high, as we see in 1B.16 and 6B.13, and it seems likely that he was a member of Mencius's broader network, rather than a disciple in the strict sense. The early Confucian lineages included a number of followers from the Yuezheng family, and Yuezheng Ke may have been associated with Mencius more by family connection to his school than by any sustained teacher-disciple relationship.

Yugong Zhisi 庾公之斯, 4B.24. A skillful archer of Weì.

Z

Zai Wo 宰我, 2A.2. Zai Yu (予), a senior disciple of Confucius.

Zang Cang 臧倉, 1B.16. A courtier in Lu.

Zeng Xi 曾西 (c. 475-405), 2A.1. Zeng Shen (申), a son of Zengzi.

Zeng Xi 曾皙, 4A.19, 7B.36, 7B.37. Father of Zengzi.

Zeng Yuan 曾元, 4A.19. A son of Zengzi.

Zengzi 曾子 (c. 505-436), 1B.12, 2A.2, 2B.2, 3A.2, 3A.4, 3B.7, 4A.19, 4B.31, 7B.36. Zeng Shen (參), a junior disciple of Confucius who became a prominent teacher in Lu after his teacher's death. His school of Confucianism placed unusual stress on the virtue of filiality. Mencius frequently cites Zengzi and Zisi, and his own line of teachers traced back to those two figures. (Many scholars view Zisi as having studied initially with Zengzi.)

Zhang Yi 張儀, 3B.2. A famed diplomatic strategist who counseled many rulers.

Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子, 3B.1. Leader of a powerful warlord family in Spring and Autumn era Jin.

Zhao Meng 趙孟, 6A.17. Leader of a powerful warlord family in Spring and Autumn era Jin.

Zhi. *See* Bandit Zhi.

Zhongren 仲壬, 5A.6. The third king of the Shang Dynasty.

Zhou Xiao 周霄, 3B.3. A native of Wei.

Zhòu 紂 (r.c. 1086-1045), 1B.8, 2A.1, 3B.9, 4A.9, 4A.13, 5A.6, 5B.1, 6A.6, 7A.22. The immoral tyrant whose rule as the last king of the Shang Dynasty led to its conquest by Zhou forces under King Wu. Zhòu is paired with Jie, the wicked last ruler of the Xia, as a king whose unethical conduct was so extreme that it led to a shift in Tian's "mandate" for a hereditary house to rule the world.

Zhuang Bao 莊暴, 1B.1. A courtier in the state of Qi. [ZQ]

Zichan 子產, 4B.2, 5A.2. A much admired chief minister in the state of Zheng during the sixth century, Gongsun Qiao 公孫僑. The *Analects* accords him unusual praise.

Zidu 子都, 6A.7. In legend, a man of surpassing good looks.

Zigong 子貢 (c. 520-450), 2A.2, 3A.4. Duanmu Si (端木賜), a leading disciple of Confucius, who, after Confucius's death, acted as his chief mourner.

Zikuai 子噲, 2B.8. The ruler of the state of Yan, whose abdication in favor his chief minister was the incident that prompted the invasion of Yan by Qi in 314.

Ziliu 子柳, *See* Xie Liu.

Zilu 子路 (c. 542-480), 2A.1, 2A.8, 3B.7, 5A.8. Zhong You (仲由), Confucius's senior disciple, who predeceased his teacher.

Zimo 子莫, 7A.26. Criticized by Mencius for inflexibility in following single rule of holding to a moderate course. Zhao Qi identifies him as a worthy man of Lu; however, there are various theories of his identity, spurred by the prominence of his ideas implied in Mencius's grouping him together with Mozi and Yangzhu.

Zishu Yi 子叔疑, 2B.10. Identity unclear. Some commentators do not read this as a name, and interpret 2B.10 differently.

Zisi 子思 (c. 483-402), 2B.11, 4B.31, 5B.3, 5B.6, 5B.7, 6B.6. Kong Ji (孔伋), Confucius's grandson and a leading Confucian of the fifth century. Mencius's teaching lineage extends back to Zisi, and the *Xunzi* names Zisi and Mencius as the leaders of a single faction of the school.

Zixia 子夏 (c. 507-420), 2A.2, 3A.4. Bu Shang (卜商), a junior disciple of Confucius who specialized in the *Poetry*, and became court tutor in the state of Weì.

Zixiang 子襄, 2A.2. A disciple of Zengzi. [ZQ]

Ziyou 子游 (c. 506-445), 2A.2, 3A.4. Yan Yan (言偃), a junior disciple of Confucius.

Zizhang 子張 (c. 503-450), 2A.2, 3A.4. Zhuansun Shi (顓孫師), a junior disciple of Confucius.

Zizhi 子之, 2B.8. The chief minister of Yan, whose ascendance to the throne upon the abdication of his ruler sparked the invasion of Yan by Qi in 314.

Zizhuo Ruzi 子濯孺子, 4B.24. A skillful archer of Zheng.

INDEX OF PLACES

Biying 畢郢. Identified in 4B.1 as the place in the Wei 渭 River valley where King Wen died. Commentary corrects the name to Bicheng 畢程. See **Map 6**.

Bin 邠. The original Zhou homeland, over which King Tai ruled before leading a migration to Mt. Qi, in the Wei River valley (1B.14-15). The specific location remains a matter of scholarly dispute, but it is commonly located in the upper Fen 汾 River valley. Usually written 豳. See the inserted map at 1B.15.

Bo 亳. The Shang homeland at the time that Tang conquered the Xia, thus, the original capital of the Shang Dynasty. Its location remains a matter of scholarly dispute, but it is commonly placed at the location of the later city Shangqiu 商邱. See **Map 6**.

Cai 蔡. A minor southern state visited by Confucius. See **Maps 3 and 4**.

Chaowu 朝舞山. A mountain in northern Shandong, mentioned in 1B.4. See **Map 1**.

Chen 陳. A minor state in central China, visited by Confucius. See **Map 3**.

Chong 祟. A place within the state of Qi, mentioned in 2B.14, whose location is unknown.

Chong Mountain 崇 山. The place to which the villain Huan Dou was banished by Shun. Its location was said to have been at the "southern frontier," and is located by commentators variously in modern Hunan Province, or in Guangxi or Guangdong Provinces.

Chu 楚. One of the most powerful states during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. The most prominent of the southern states, whose language was different from that spoken by the Zhou people (see 3B.6). See **Maps 3 and 4**.

Chuiji 垂棘. A place that produced fine jade disks, according to 5A.9. Its location is location is unknown.

East Mountain [Dongshan] 東山. Identified by commentators as Mount Meng 蒙山, in Shandong. See **Map 1**.

Fan 范. A location in Qi visited by Mencius. See **Map 5**.

Fuxia 負夏. An unknown location in eastern China, associated with Shun in 4B.1.

Gaotang 高唐. A town in Qi. See **Map 5**.

Ge 葛. A place near Tang's capital at Bo, whose ruler Tang overthrew (1B.3). See **Map 6**.

Ge 蓋. A city in eastern Shandong that was entrusted for management to the Qi courtier Wang Huan, whom Mencius particularly despised. See **Map 5**.

Guo 虢. A small state near the bend in the Yellow River, which was extinguished by the state of Jin early in the Spring and Autumn period (5A.9). See **Map 3**.

Han 漢 River. See **Map 1**.

Hedong 河東. Along with Henei, below, regions within the state of Wei. Hedong was the region east of the Yellow River as it flowed south towards its great bend. See **Map 6**.

Henei 河內. Further east than Hedong, a region of central Wei north of the Yellow River. See **Map 6**.

Huai River 淮. The waterway of east China between the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. Its drainage basin was populated by peoples of the non-Zhou Yi tribes. See **Map 1**.

Ji River 濟. The Ji River ran close and parallel to the lower reaches of the Yellow River at a time when the latter drained into Bohai Bay much further north than it does today. The channel of the Ji later became the lower portion of the Yellow River. See **Map 1**.

Ji Mountain 箕山. A mountain in central China, to which Yu's minister Yi is said to have traveled to ensure that the Xia throne would pass to Yu's son (5A.6). See **Map 1**.

Jin 晉. The most powerful state of Spring and Autumn period China, Jin was split into three separate states by leading warlord families in 453. The strongest of these successor states, We, sometimes was referred to as Jin. See **Map 3**.

Jing 荊. An alternative name for the state of Chu.

Ju 莒. A small state in eastern Shandong, later under the control of Qi. See **Map 5**.

Kuiqiu 葵丘. The site of a famous convocation of lords by Duke Huan of Qi in 651. See **Map 6**.

Langye 琅邪. A coastal town in southern Shandong, treated as a terminus of royal tours by the king of Qi in 1B.4, and later by the First Emperor. See **Map 5**.

Liang 梁. Also called "Great (*da* 大) Liang," the capital of the state of Wei during its later years. The state of Wei stretched at times from the land east of the great bend in the Yellow River in the west to lands south of the river's northern bend towards the sea in the east. From the late fourth century on, the pressures of Qin were so great that Wei rulers made Liang, which was at the southeastern extreme of Wei, the capital, and the state was frequently referred to as Liang, rather than Wei. See **Map 6**.

Liang Mountains 梁山. A range in Shaanxi that King Tai is said to have crossed when leading the Zhou people from their original homeland in Shanxi to the Wei River valley. See **Map 1** and the inserted map at 1B.15.

Lingqiu 靈丘. A border city in Qi. See **Map 5**. (Some scholars locate it elsewhere, to the southeast near Teng.)

Lu 魯. A state in Shandong that was originally the hereditary demesne of the Duke of Zhou. It was the home state of Confucius, and one of the places Mencius visited in the hope of gaining an official appointment. See **Maps 3, 4, and 5**.

Mingtiao 鳴條. An unknown location in eastern China, said in 4B.1 to be the place where Shun died.

Nanhe 南河. In the *Mencius*, this name denotes an area by the Yellow River believed to be south of Yao's capital. See **Map 6**.

Nanyang 南陽. A town at the border of Qi and Lu. See **Map 5b**

North Sea 北海. Probably a reference to Bohai 渤海. See **Map 5**.

Ox Mountain [Niushan] 牛山. A mountain a few miles south of the capital of Qi. See **Map 1**.

Pinglu 平陸. A city towards the western border of Qi. See **Map 5**.

Qi 岐. The initial dwelling place of the Zhou people in the Wei River valley, under the slopes of Mt. Qi. (See the inserted map for 1B.15.)

Qi 齊. A major state during both the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Qi was generally the dominant power in eastern China from the seventh century through the end of the fourth century. For a century, from the mid-fourth century to mid-third centuries, the capital of Qi was also a cosmopolitan magnet for intellectual talent, much as Paris, London, Beijing, and New York were millennia later, due the patronage of the kings of Qi, who supported a large population of learned men in a designated neighborhood near the city's Jixia Gate. Mencius probably spent most of his career as a persuader in Qi, and that is the location for most of the events recorded in the *Mencius*. See **Maps 3, 4, and 5**.

Qi River 淇. See **Map 1**.

Qi Mountain 岐山. The slope beneath which King Tai of the Zhou settled his people after their migration from Bin in Shanxi (1B.15). See **Map 1**.

Qin 秦. The great state of western China during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Less than a century after Mencius's time, Qin would extinguish all its rival states and unify China. A sense of its rising power may be felt in 1A.5. See **Maps 3 and 4**.

Qu 屈. Apparently a place that produced fine chariots (the comment at 5A.9 is reinforced by a commentary tradition to the *Zuozhuan*), its location is disputed.

Ren 任. A small statelet in Shandong, just west of Teng, which courted Mencius (6B.1). See **Map 5**.

Ru River 汝. A river in central China tributary to the Huai. See **Map 1**.

Sanwei 三危, Said to be the place where Shun banished the three Miao tribes (5A.3). Its location was said to have been at the "western frontier," and is located by commentators variously in modern Gansu, Sichuan, or Yunnan Provinces.

Shiqiu 石丘. Located in northern Henan, according to the Qing period *Yitongzhi* geography, (others locate it elsewhere). See **Map 6**.

Shu 舒. A southern state of the Spring and Autumn period, the name of which is often liked with its large neighbor to the west, Jing (that is, Chu), in denoting the south as a region. See **Map 3**.

Si River 泗. A river is Shandong associated with Lu, where its source is located. See **Map 1**.

Song 宋. A state established early in the Zhou period as a homeland for Shang refugees from the conquest. It enjoyed eras of great power, and in Mencius's time continued to aspire to dominance, its ruler taking the title "King" in 328. Mencius traveled to Song, perhaps in response to those state aspirations. It may be that Song's Shang connections account for "the man from Song" becoming a trope for a rustic fool. See **Maps 3 and 4**.

Ta River 漯. A river that, at one time, ran parallel to both the Yellow River and the Ji River, flowing into Bohai Bay. See **Map 1**.

Tai Mountain 泰山. One of the "Five Sacred Mountains" in traditional Chinese culture. The highest point in Shandong. See **Map 1**.

Tang 棠. A city in Shandong, and, judging from 7B.23, the location of state granaries. See **Map 5**.

Teng 滕. A statelet in Shandong. Mencius advises the young Duke Wen of Teng at various points in the *Mencius*. See **Map 5**.

Tong 桐. The place where Yi Yin banished the fourth Shang ruler until he was ready to reform (5A.6). Its location is disputed, and its role may be more legend than history, but an early source places it in Henan. See **Map 6**.

Wei 魏. One of the great states of the Warring States era, dominant for periods during the late fifth and fourth centuries, Wei was the strongest of the three successor states of Jin. Known also as Liang, after one of its capital cities. The *Mencius* opens with his persuasions to the long serving King Hui. See **Maps 4 and 6**.

Weì 衛. A significant state in the Spring and Autumn period, the power of Weì waned during the Warring States era. Close to Lu, and with many connections to the Ruist community (see 5A.8). See **Maps 3, 4, and 5**.

Wei River 洧. One of a pair of rivers (the other is the Zhen) with sources in Henan that conjoin and flow to the Huai. (Note: This is not the Wei River, unmentioned in the *Mencius*, that flowed through the homeland of Qin, far to the west, and which appears on the map insert at 1B.15.) See **Map 1**.

Wu 吳. A briefly powerful Spring and Autumn era in the Yangzi delta region. See **Map 3**.

Wucheng 武城. A city near Bi in the state of Lu. See **Map 5**.

Wuling 於陵. A town in northwestern Shandong. See **Map 5**.

Xiu 休. A town in Shandong where Mencius lodged as he departed Qi (2B.14). See **Map 5**.

Xue 薛. A statelet in Shandong that fell under the control of Qi (see 1B.14). See **Map 5**.

Yan 燕. A major state during both the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period. Yan's position in the extreme northeast buffered it from the endemic wars of the period to some degree, but it succumbed to invasion by Qi in 314 (see 2B.8). See **Maps 3 and 4**.

Yan 奄. An archaic name for the region later occupied by the state of Lu

Yangcheng 陽城. The name of both a mountain and a town in Henan, said in 5A.6 to have been the place where Yu retreated to leave the throne open to Yu's son. See **Map 6**.

Yangzi River 江. The major river of southern China, referred to only as "the River" (Jiang), using a word borrowed from non-Zhou peoples of the region that came to be used generically in other river names. See **Map 1**.

Yellow River 河. The major river of northern China, referred to only as "the River" (He), a Zhou term that came to be used generically in other river names. See **Map 1**.

Ying 嬴. A town in Shandong where Mencius lodged when returning to Qi from his mother's funeral (2B.7). See **Map 5**.

You 攸. A state in the east subdued by King Wu. Its location is unknown. (Some scholars do not read "You" as a place name.)

Youzhou 幽州. In legend, the place where Shun banished Gonggong. Its location was said to have been at the "northern frontier." The name is an archaic general name for the northeastern regions, generally comparable to the area of the state of Yan.

Youxin 有莘. The location where Yi Yin farmed before serving as Tang's chief minister, according to 5A.7. No such location is known.

Youbi 有庳. Supposedly the place which Shun provided to his brother Xiang as a demesne (5A.3). No such location is known.

Yu 虞. A small state near the bend in the Yellow River, which was extinguished by the state of Jin early in the Spring and Autumn period (5A.9). See **Map 3**.

Yu Mountain 羽山. In legend, the place where Shun had Gun, the father of Yu, executed. It is said to have been at the "eastern frontier," and is placed by commentators variously in modern Shandong or Jiangsu Provinces.

Yue 越. A briefly powerful Spring and Autumn era, south of the Yangzi delta region. See **Map 3**.

Zhao 趙. One of the three Warring States era successors states of Jin. See **Map 4**.

Zhen River 溱. Conjoins with the River Wei 洧 in Henan and flows to the Huai. See **Map 1**.

Zheng 鄭. A powerful state early in the Spring and Autumn period, by Mencius's time it was no longer an independent state, having been annexed by the state of Han 韓. Zheng is notable because of the influence of its sixth century prime minister, Zichan, about whom Mencius has not much good to say (4B.2). See **Map 3**.

Zhou 周. Recognized as the legitimate ruling house of all of China from its conquest of the Shang in 1045 until its extinction by Qin in 256, by Mencius's time, the Zhou kings were no longer of serious significance. However, the institutions of the Zhou Dynasty and the culture they reflected were the basic framework of the *li* that Confucian Ru were trained in, and which represented the highpoint of historical culture. The founding rulers of the Zhou, Kings Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Zhou, were regarded as sages by Mencius. Prior to 771, the Zhou kings maintained, to greater or lesser degrees, powerful influence

over the largest state territory in the world (See **Map 2**); after 771, Zhou rulers were confined to greater or lesser control over their small statelet on the River Lo 洛 (See **Maps 3, and 4**).

Zhou 晝. A town in Shandong where Mencius lodged as he departed Qi (2B.11). See **Map 5**.

Zhuanfu Mountain 轉附山. A mountain in northern Shandong, mentioned in 1B.4. See **Map 1**.

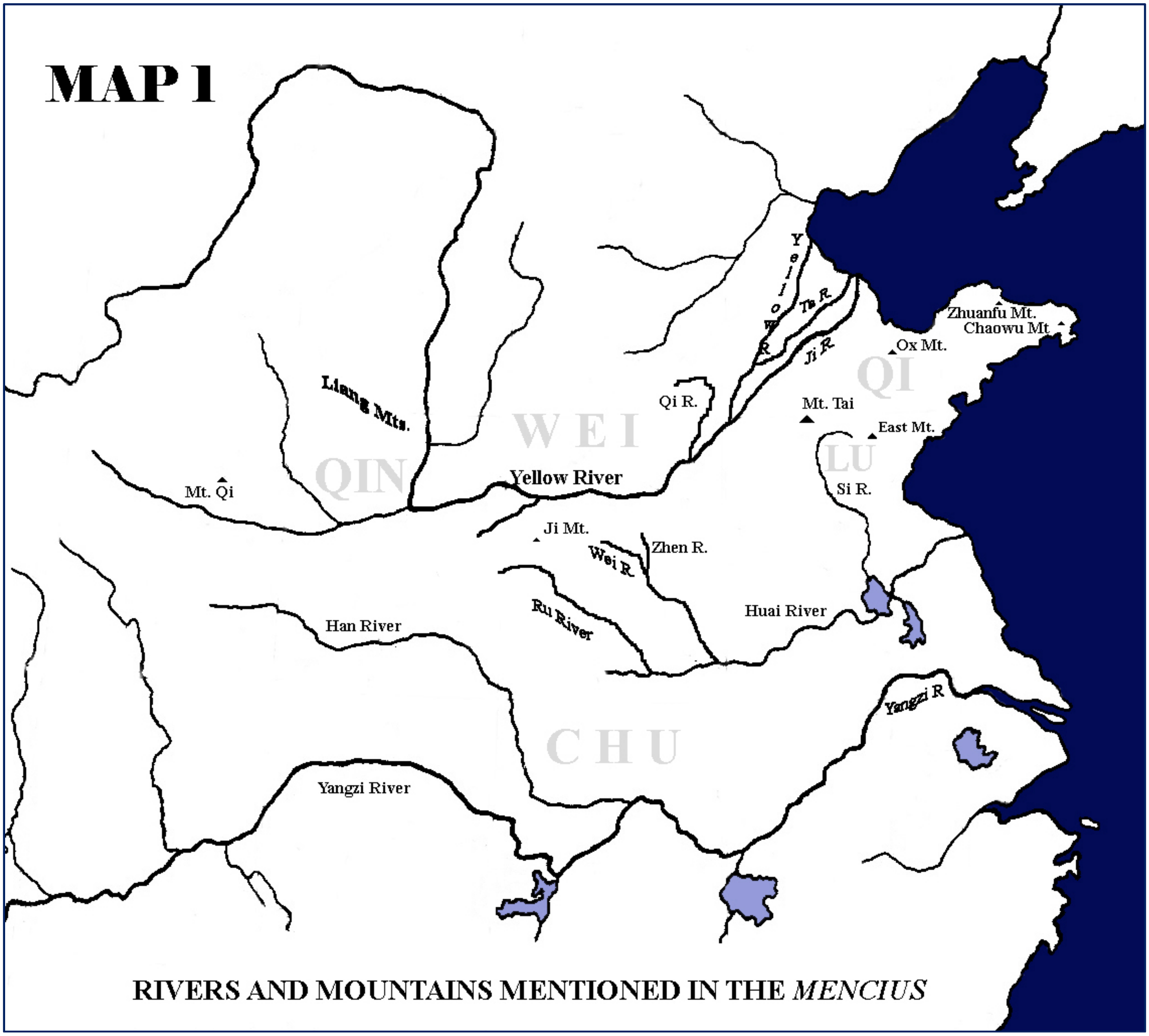
Zhuping 諸馮. The *Mencius* claims this was Shun’s birthplace (4B.1). Its location is unknown.

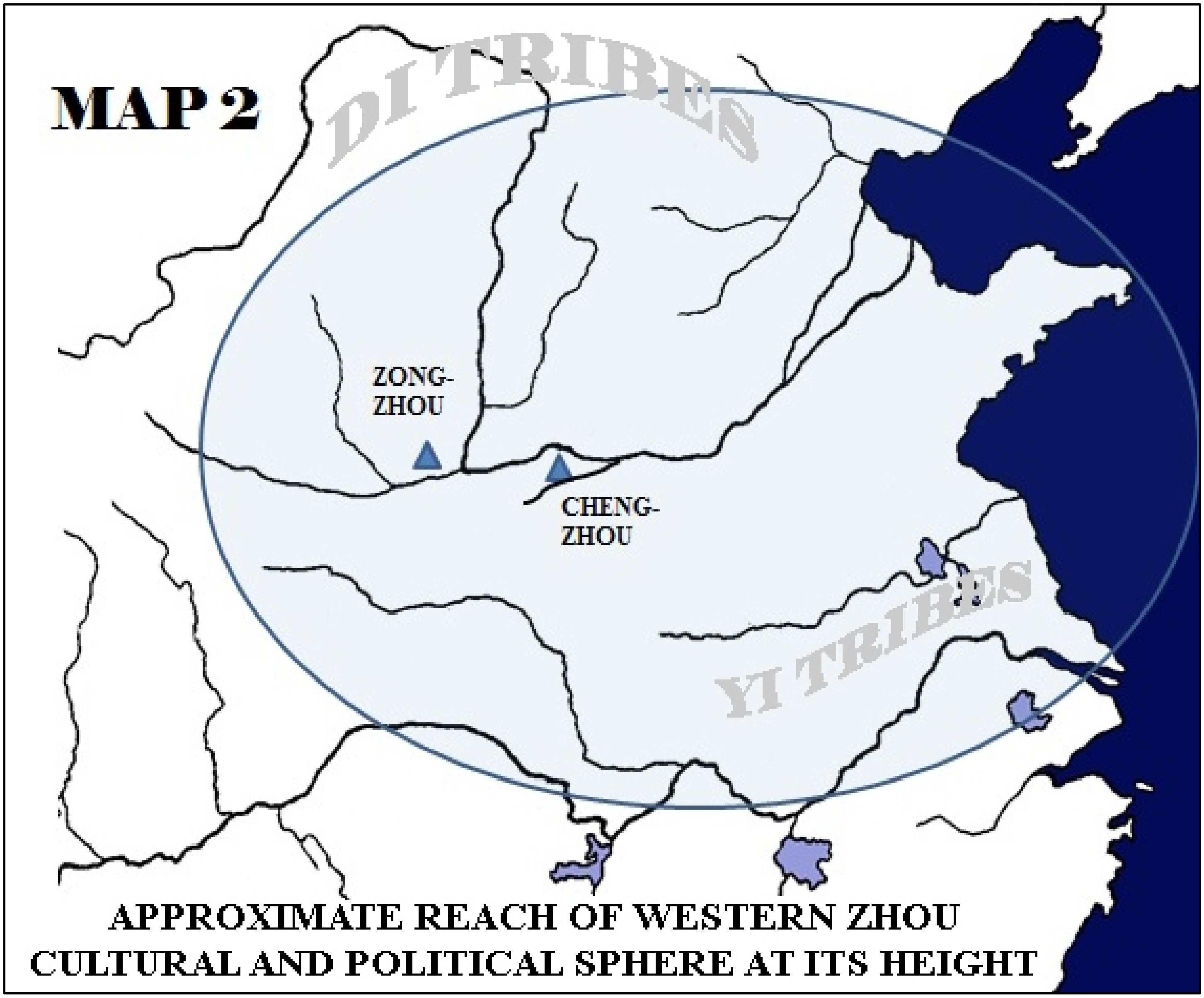
Zou 鄒. Mencius’s home state, a small and powerless statelet in Shandong. See **Maps 4 and 5**.

MAPS

The Maps in this section note, with a few exceptions, only those places named in the *Mencius*. In a few cases, locations are somewhat speculative, and these cases are noted in the Index of Place Names. Where speculation seems to have little basis, places do not appear on these maps. To locate places which are not well known, I have relied chiefly on three authorities: Yang Bojun's 楊伯峻, *Menzi yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Beijing: 1960), Cheng Faren's 程發軔 *Chunqiu Zuoshizhuan diming tukaoi* 春秋左氏傳地名圖考 (Taibei: 1967), and *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集 (Shanghai: 1982), edited by Tan Qixiang 譚其驤. Geographical positions are approximate on these hand drawn maps, and I have generally aimed to indicate relative position rather than absolute location. Throughout the Zhou period, boundaries separating political entities changed continually.

The following maps appear in this section (in addition, see the map inserted to accompany 1B.15: The Zhou Migration under King Tai):


MAP 1
Liang Mts.
Mt. Qi
QIN
WEI
Yellow River
Qi R.
Yellow R.
Ta R.
Ji R.
QI
Zhuanfu Mt.
Chaowu Mt.
Ox Mt.
Mt. Tai
East Mt.
LU
Si R.
Ji Mt.
Wei R.
Zhen R.
Huai River
Han River
Ru River
Yangzi R
CHU
Yangzi River
RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS MENTIONED IN THE *MENCIUS*


MAP 2
DI TRIBES
ZONG-
ZHOU
CHENG-
ZHOU
YI TRIBES
APPROXIMATE REACH OF WESTERN ZHOU
CULTURAL AND POLITICAL SPHERE AT ITS HEIGHT

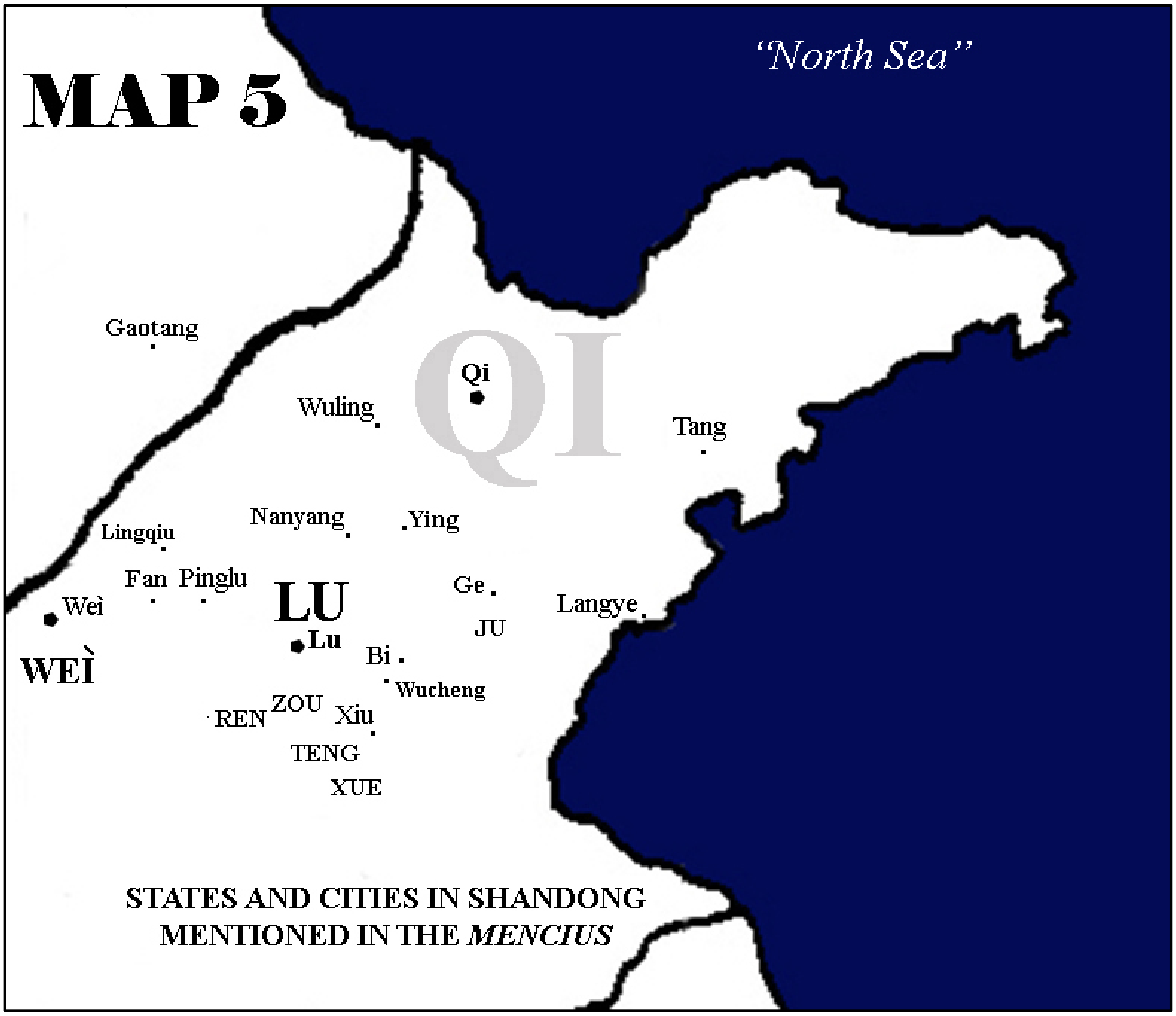
MAP 3

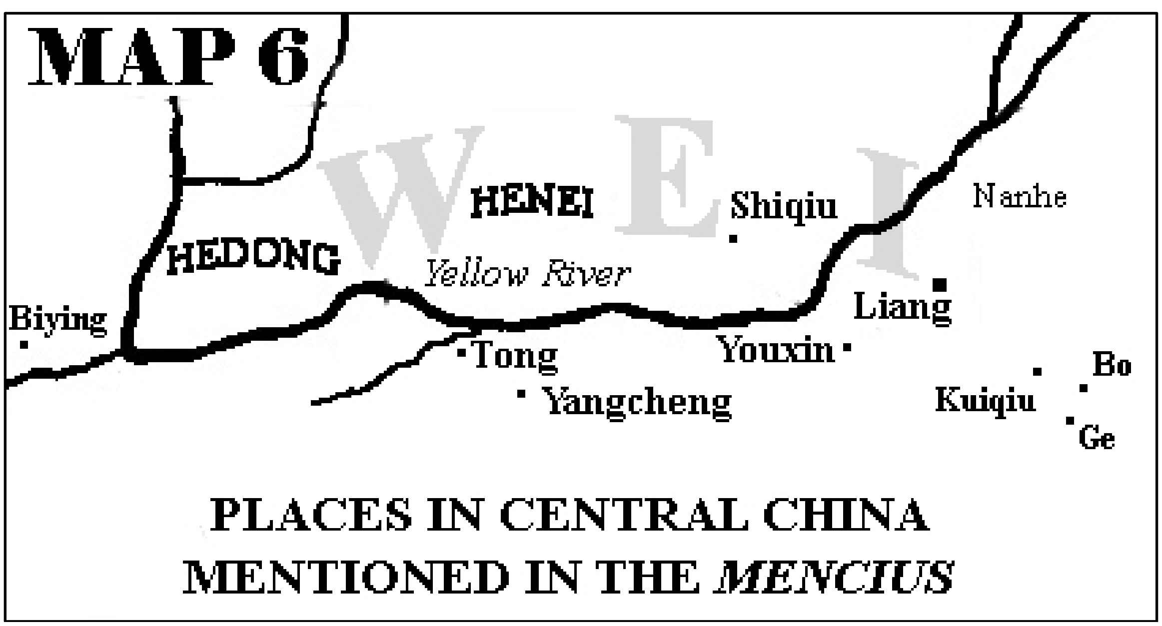


STATES OF THE SPRING & AUTUMN PERIOD MENTIONED IN THE *MENCIUS*



MAJOR STATES OF THE WARRING STATES ERA
AND SMALLER STATES MENTIONED IN THE *MENCIUS*


MAP 5
"North Sea"
QI
Qi
Gaotang
Wuling
Tang
Lingqiu
Nanyang
Ying
Fan
Pinglu
LU
Ge
Wei
Langye
JU
Lu
WEÌ
Bi
Wucheng
REN
ZOU
Xiu
TENG
XUE
STATES AND CITIES IN SHANDONG
MENTIONED IN THE *MENCIUS*


MAP 6
WEI
HENEI
Shiqiu
Nanhe
HEDONG
Yellow River
Liang
Biying
Tong
Youxin
Bo
Yangcheng
Kuiqiu
Ge
PLACES IN CENTRAL CHINA
MENTIONED IN THE *MENCIUS*